

# GETTING IT RIGHT! For Ohio's Future

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## EDUCATION ADVOCATES VOW TO GET IT RIGHT FOR OHIO'S FUTURE

*Consortium takes first step toward Ohio constitutional amendment to fix school funding*

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A consortium dedicated to strengthening education and economic opportunities in Ohio submitted to Attorney General Marc Dann today a proposed constitutional amendment to establish a high-quality education as a fundamental right for Ohio's children through the implementation of a new school funding model. The consortium consists of 12 statewide education groups.

The proposed amendment campaign, **Getting It Right for Ohio's Future**, supports developing a well-educated work force to help stimulate good jobs and restore Ohio's competitiveness. It also would establish a new accountability structure at the state level to ensure high-quality educational opportunities are available across Ohio in a cost-effective manner.

"The Ohio Supreme Court has ruled four times that Ohio's school funding formula is unconstitutional," said Jim Betts, spokesperson for the Campaign for Ohio's Future, representing the consortium of grassroots and professional education organizations. "**Getting It Right for Ohio's Future** puts Ohio's children first by creating a system that determines what a high-quality education would cost based on student need and paying for that education without an unfair reliance on property taxes."

Because Ohio's current school funding formula relies heavily on property taxes, it frequently forces local districts to go back to the ballot to keep school programs intact. **Getting It Right for Ohio's Future** reduces reliance on property taxes and decreases the need for local levies.

**Getting It Right for Ohio's Future** would:

- Amend the Ohio Constitution to establish that a high-quality education is a fundamental right for every Ohio child
- Determine levels of funding based on student need for all types of students, including special education, vocational education, gifted or economically disadvantaged
- Eliminate "phantom revenue" of untaxed property value calculations by the state, thereby reducing the need for local tax levies
- Exempt Ohio seniors and disabled citizens from property taxes on the first \$40,000 of the market value of their homes

- Create an independent commission appointed by Ohio's top elected leaders – the governor, speaker of the House and Senate president – that monitors districts to ensure that high-quality educational opportunities are available to students in a cost-effective manner
- Direct the independent commission to report annually to the governor, General Assembly, State Board of Education and the public
- Create and maintain a permanent local government fund to support police and fire departments, libraries and other local government services that support Ohio schools, our citizens and Ohio's ability to compete for jobs
- Establish a system that ensures total state funding for Ohio's public institutions of higher education receive no less than the amount provided in 2007 and increases annually based on the state's personal income percentage.

The attorney general's office will have 10 days to respond to the petition **Getting It Right for Ohio's Future** submits, ruling whether it accurately reflects the proposed amendment. Once the attorney general approves the petition language submitted today, and the Ohio Ballot Board certifies the petition for distribution, the consortium will kick off a vigorous petition campaign across Ohio to collect enough valid signatures to put the measure on the statewide November 2007 ballot.

**"Getting It Right for Ohio's Future** is a win for Ohio's students and schools, it's a win for our communities and it's a win for our business owners who need to hire the best and brightest to stay competitive in the marketplace," said Betts. "I urge all Ohioans to help us spread the word about this critical constitutional amendment that will ensure stronger schools, a stronger economy and a better quality of life in Ohio."

For more information about **Getting It Right for Ohio's Future**, please visit [www.rightforohio.org](http://www.rightforohio.org).