



Dear Legislator,

I am writing to you in regard to **HJRCA 57** on behalf of **Taxpayers United of America's (TUA)** membership of 20,000+ Illinois taxpayers.

This past Monday, April 11, Speaker of the Illinois House Michael J. Madigan introduced **HJRCA 57**, a proposed constitutional amendment to make taxpayer-financed government education a “fundamental right” in Illinois, further obligating taxpayers to fund such a system by providing “that the State has the preponderant financial responsibility (instead of the primary responsibility) for financing the system.”

The proposed constitutional amendment should be opposed on numerous grounds.

This bill will put an additional and unnecessary burden on taxpayers at a time of unprecedented financial strain. Illinois is in its tenth month without a budget and the impasse could possibly continue into the next fiscal year – perhaps even past the November 2016 elections.

Illinois has recorded fourteen straight years of budget deficits and is facing a \$10 billion budget deficit by this summer. The state has the lowest credit ratings and by far the worst-funded government pension system in the country.

Illinois taxpayers are not prepared to send more of their hard-earned dollars to Springfield for reckless mismanagement, nor to be diverted into the unsustainable government pension system. Taxpayers are tired of subsidizing legions of ineffective government employees and bureaucracies, both ever-expanding in numbers while failing to educate students at even the most basic and reasonable levels.

The time has come for real education reform in Illinois, on this point we can agree, but support for Illinois House Michael J. Madigan's education funding constitutional amendment, **HJRCA 57**, is simply doubling down on decades of failed education and financing policies by further forcing taxpayers to subsidize the entire fiasco.

Passage of this constitutional amendment would be disastrous for Illinois, as hiking property taxes and the state income tax would be two of the most likely pursuits of the Illinois General Assembly. It would only perpetuate the currently broken state education system, rather than seeking systemic reforms.

Taxpayers are nearing a breaking point – as evidenced by those who have become ex-Illinoisans in the past few years; the out-migration data and decreased revenue proves it. We urge you to vote responsibly to protect your constituents from this legislation.

Sincerely,

Jim Tobin