Budget: Tough choices over cuts to revenue sharing hinder progress

Lawmakers weigh in on deep cuts

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The State Journal spoke to mid-Michigan lawmakers Thursday, posing the following questions, as the Legislature continued negotiations for a budget ahead of a Thursday deadline. Cuts to K-12 education and the Michigan Promise scholarships were approved in bipartisan conference committees Wednesday; a bipartisan conference committee still is negotiating state revenue sharing for local communities and county governments.

THE QUESTIONS

- **SCHOOLS:** Will you support the proposed cut of $218 in per-pupil funding for K-12 education?
- **SCHOLARSHIPS:** Will you support the proposed elimination of $120 million in funding for the Michigan Promise scholarship program?
- **REVENUE SHARING:** Would you support the approximately $164 million in state revenue sharing funding cuts being reviewed by a bipartisan conference committee?

THE ANSWERS

STATE SENATE

Sen. Valde Garcia
R-Howell

SCHOOLS: Yes. The state must consider deep cuts everywhere.
SCHOLARSHIPS: No. The state has made a commitment to tens of thousands of college students.
REVENUE SHARING: Yes. The size of deficit mandates it.

Sen. Gretchen Whitmer
D-East Lansing

SCHOOLS: No. Schools are operating already at the margins.
SCHOLARSHIPS: No. The state needs to keep its promise to students.
REVENUE SHARING: Would vote against deep cuts.

Sen. Alan Cropsey
R-DeWitt

SCHOOLS: Yes. The state has a constitutional requirement to balance budget.
SCHOLARSHIPS: Yes.
REVENUE SHARING: Yes.

Sen. Patricia Birkholz
R-Saugatuck

SCHOOLS: Yes. Would support cuts as part of a balanced budget that reaches reduction targets.
SCHOLARSHIPS: Yes. Would support cuts as part of a balanced budget that reaches reduction targets.
REVENUE SHARING: Would favor deep cuts.

STATE HOUSE

Rep. Joan Bauer
D-Lansing

SCHOOLS: No. The cut is devastating to education.
SCHOLARSHIPS: No. College students are counting on the money.
REVENUE SHARING: No.

Rep. Mark Meadows
D-East Lansing

SCHOOLS: No. The state's future depends on solid education funding.
SCHOLARSHIPS: No. The state needs to keep its commitment.
REVENUE SHARING: No. It's a critical element of police and fire protection.

Rep. Rick Jones
R-Grand Ledge

SCHOOLS: Yes, if the only other alternative was a tax increase.
SCHOLARSHIPS: Yes. Reluctantly would support the cut to more fully fund K-12 and revenue sharing.
REVENUE SHARING: Yes, if the only other alternative was a tax increase.

Rep. Barb Byrum
D-Onondaga

SCHOOLS: No. The state needs to fund "its future."
SCHOLARSHIPS: No. The state can't "turn its back" on students.
REVENUE SHARING: No. Deep cuts would hurt police and fire protection.

Rep. Paul Opsommer
R- DeWitt

SCHOOLS: Yes. But hope the state can restore part of the funding by reducing the Earned Income Tax Credit.
SCHOLARSHIPS: Yes. Reluctantly would support the cut to more fully fund K-12 education and revenue sharing.
REVENUE SHARING: Favor a funding cut half the proposed size.

Rep. Brian Calley
R-Portland

SCHOOLS: Yes. The cut is not ideal, but rejecting it now means "starting all over again" with a budget deal.
SCHOLARSHIPS: Yes. But hope the state can restore part of the funding by reducing the Earned Income Tax Credit.
REVENUE SHARING: Yes. Would support cut if recommended by a conference committee.

Budget: Tough Choices Over Cuts To Revenue Sharing Hinder Progress. Lawmakers Weigh In On Deep Cuts

The **Promise Scholarship** provides eligible students with a $4,000 for college expenses.
School funding provides each school district with a minimum $7,316 to $12,324 in per pupil spending.
Revenue Sharing is state funding that helps pay for police & fire protection, local roads and other municipal and county functions.

1. What position patterns do you notice on the school issue? Explain fully. Be specific

2. What position patterns do you notice on the Promise Scholarship issue? Explain fully. Be specific

3. What position patterns do you notice on the Revenue Sharing issue? Explain fully. Be specific

4. Are the Republicans consistent on the issues? Explain fully. Be specific

5. Are the Democrats consistent on the issues? Explain fully. Be specific

6. Does the voting pattern of Republicans make them bad legislators? Does the voting pattern of Democrats make them bad legislators? Explain fully. Be specific

7. How would you or your group have voted on the school issue? Promise Scholarship issue? Revenue Sharing issue? Explain fully. Be specific

8. How does this article relate to what we have studied about the political spectrum? Explain fully. Be specific