

Dear _____,

As a voter, taxpayer and resident of the _____ School District, I urge you to support and fight for the repeal of the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) starting in the 2014-2015 school year. Formerly known as the Deficit Reduction Assessment, its original purpose was to reduce state support to public schools in order to close the state's own \$10 billion budget deficit. This annual practice is detrimental to quality education on Long Island and is not acceptable to taxpayers. ***Now is the time to work together to Eliminate the GEA!***

The success of Long Island's public schools is the pride of New York State. Over the past three years, the GEA has reduced state aid to Long Island school districts by close to *\$1 billion*, with nearly half of this amount coming from Long Island's 28 low-wealth school districts. In an attempt to lessen the destructive effect of the GEA, those districts that can, have been relying on their fund balances and reserve funds to minimize detrimental cuts to educational programs and to maintain a tax levy increase that local taxpayers can support.

School districts have laid off teachers, administrators and support staff; consolidated and/or closed schools; increased class sizes; reduced and/or completely eliminated sports programs, music and the arts, and enrichment and summer programs; and delayed facilities preservation. (INSERT SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT HERE.) At the same time, expenditures which school districts have no control over – such as pensions, benefits and health insurance – continue to grow.

We have passed the point where we are doing more with less. We are now doing less with less. The GEA, combined with a major state aid reduction from which we have not recovered, insufficient mandate relief and the enactment of the property tax cap, has created irreversible financial consequences. Our schools are at a crossroads. The continuation of the GEA is an unacceptable practice that will chisel away and ultimately destroy the quality of education our children deserve, we as taxpayers expect and our state leaders promote with pride.

We can no longer bear the burden imposed on taxpayers by the GEA. I am asking you, as our elected representative, to be our voice in Albany and take effective action. ***Now is the time to work together to Eliminate the GEA!***

Sincerely,