

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

# Whitmer Press Release

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## **Whitmer: Pay Should Be Docked for "Canceled" Sessions as well as Missed Sessions**

LANSING— State Senator **Gretchen Whitmer** continued her call for government reform today, calling for lawmakers to forfeit their pay for days when legislative session is scheduled and then canceled. Whitmer has already proposed a plan that would dock pay from lawmakers who miss session and other reforms.

“Pulling the bait and switch on a public that is already suffering from legislative bungling adds insult to injury,” said Sen. Whitmer. “Other Michigan workers can’t say they’ll ‘tentatively’ show up for work, not show, and then still get a paycheck, so why should lawmakers?”

Once again, the House and Senate claimed they were going to have session this week, then adjourned yesterday with no real action or voting and the two week vacation continues. Sen. Whitmer questioned the sincerity of the Senate leadership in a floor statement last week when she predicted just this outcome: “I rise to ask a question. My question is just this: Are we really coming in next Wednesday? There are a lot of kids and schools all across our state who are wondering if we are going to fix the cuts that we’ve imposed on schools. So my only question is this: Are we really going to be here to work on that, or are we gone until December?”

The Senate currently has session days planned for Tuesday, December 1 through Thursday, December 3 with the two following weeks of session marked as “tentative.” If the Senate only meets three days in December of 2009 it would be less than half the average number of December session days between 2001 and 2008. During the past eight years, the Senate has only averaged 6.875 meeting days in December.

“These lawmakers have already robbed our kids of money for their schools, and taken cops and firefighters off the street, now they’re robbing taxpayers by not showing up for work,” Whitmer said. “That’s why I’ve called for serious reforms that might start to restore some accountability in this town.”

Sen. Whitmer has introduced legislation, Senate Bill 946, which would require public officials to provide documentation on how their expense allowances are spent. She has

also introduced Senate Joint Resolution N which would reduce the salaries of legislators who have an unexcused absence from session. Whitmer also plans to introduce legislation that would: Cut legislators' pay; pro-rate legislators' pay each time local schools are sent a letter pro-rating their funding; end taxpayer-funded lifetime health care benefits for legislators; and require candidates seeking public office to disclose their income and assets.

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