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K-12 Support

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MARICOPA COMMUNITY COLLEGES FACULTY ASSOCIATION

Colleagues,

Below is the letter of support for K-12 educators that was recently adopted by FEC. It is being issued as a press release and being sent to representatives of the teacher's unions.

The Maricopa Community Colleges Faculty Association Supports K-12 Teachers' Goals of Increased Funding

The people of Arizona want a high-quality K -12 education system, and they demonstrated their support by passing Proposition 100, Proposition 301, and Proposition 123 over the years. Those ballot measures were intended to increase teacher pay and increase support for the classroom. During the recession, not all of the Prop 301 funds were allocated according to the law. Litigation ensued and resulted in a settlement of about half of the funds being returned to their intended purpose. More recently, the Legislature passed a twenty-year extension of a fully funded Prop 301 by a more than 95% bipartisan vote of both houses. This secured almost \$650 million for Arizona's K-12 system along with minor funding for universities and community colleges.

Sadly, those efforts have proven inadequate. Arizona K-12 schools are finding it increasingly difficult to staff schools with highly qualified teachers. Teachers have been more active than at any point in their history in bringing their plight to the attention to the public and the state's leaders. Their efforts have resulted in a policy statement by Governor Ducey proposing a 20% increase in salaries

over the next several years. The teachers are looking for the details of this position to be fleshed out, most importantly the source of the funding.

The success of students enrolling in community colleges depends heavily upon the education they receive in K -12. Inadequate funding of our K -12 schools also impacts the state's ability to attract quality jobs and maintain high-tech and other industries that need an educated workforce to succeed. Teacher and staff compensation should be made more competitive with teacher salaries offered by surrounding states and with salaries in private industry.

The Maricopa Community Colleges Faculty Association supports our K-12 teachers in their efforts to obtain a 20% increase in their compensation and increased funding for support staff compensation. The current teacher shortage in Arizona will be reduced by the proposed salary increase. Such an increase will also be a powerful statement of the importance of teachers to our next generation. The State of Arizona should budget for raises and cost of living allowances for both teachers and staff.



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