**Rep. Viola Davis Calls on Governor and State Superintendent to Adequately Fund Underfunded Schools**

**Facts on Funding Highlights by Rep. Viola Davis**

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The state has “fully-funded” public education only insofar as we are not currently making cuts to the present budget based on the outdated Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act. But, meeting QBE is not the same as providing a high-quality education to **all** students. The state has **underfunded** education for more than 20 years. For example:

* Georgia is one of only six states in the nation that does not provide additional funding to educate students living in poverty. I have attached a one-pager from the Georgia Budget & Policy Institute (GBPI) on how the state could meet this need. This document says Georgia is one of eight states because the document was made a couple of years ago. During the 2021 legislative session, I co-signed House Bill 10, Students Living in Poverty Act, which would provide $343 million to educate students living in poverty in Georgia. Learn more here: <https://gbpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/State-of-Education-Funding-2022.pdf>.
* Georgia’s funding for buses and drivers has gone practically unchanged since 2000, while the state has gained hundreds of thousands of students and the cost of labor, fuel and buses has all increased. Since bus funding is not in the QBE formula, the state has seemed to ignore it. Stephen Owens with GBPI wrote about how this has helped cause the school bus driver shortage here: <https://www.businessinsider.com/bus-driver-shortage-due-to-underfunding-schools-public-education-america-2021-10>.
* Rural, smaller schools face unique needs that the QBE formulas do not easily address. That is why Georgia created the Sparsity grant to specifically help these schools. That grant continues to be funded at a fraction of the formula amount. Stephen Owens wrote about that grant, and others, here: <https://gbpi.org/billions-of-dollars-behind-district-facts-sheets-show-georgia-schools-are-far-from-full-funding/>. Obviously, the state no longer has the “Annual State Budget Cuts” anymore, but all the other cuts are still present.
* The Georgia Budget and Policy Institute also documented more than $10.2 billion (with the amended budget passed, now this number is $9.9 billion since 2003) in funding being removed from education since 2003, while corporate welfare enjoyed more than $10 billion in tax credits. This includes more than $400 million in tax credits going to people and businesses outside of Georgia. Again, I am curious what repairs could have been made using this $10.2 billion. Learn more here: <https://gbpi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/State-of-Education-Funding-2022.pdf>.
* Finally, the teacher pay raise is great, but the state only pays for half of the teachers in the school (local funding and federal dollars cover the rest). So low-property-wealth districts will have a more difficult time raising pay for all their teachers. Also, recent inflation will make those raises less impactful.