

Senate District 34

Governor Whitmer's plan for COVID-19 relief would directly help Michiganders. Congress passed a bipartisan funding bill that sent much-needed dollars to Michigan to help us return to normal. The Governor's plan includes:

- Funding for Michigan schools to help return to in-person learning.
- Rent and mortgage assistance to keep Michiganders in their homes.
- Restored unemployment as Michigan returns to work.
- Food assistance for Michigan families who are struggling to buy groceries.

More than \$3.3 billion of that federal funding is being held up in the Legislature.

Here's what that means for Senate District 34:

Schools

More than \$26.8 million in unallocated funds for public schools affecting 35,702 kids in grades K-12. That amounts to \$752.54 per student in District 34 schools.

\$26,867,083 that would help schools in District 34 pay for COVID-19 testing, academic support, social and emotional support for students, and ongoing costs related to the pandemic is currently sitting in the Michigan State Treasury, including:

- \$6,333,588 for Public Schools of the City of Muskegon
- \$1,114,196 for Orchard View Schools
- \$840,867 for Fremont Public School District
- \$801,681 for Newaygo Public School District
- \$561,285 for Whitehall District Schools

Renters and Homeowners

Even before the pandemic began, **41% of renters in District 34 and another 17% of homeowners struggled to afford their monthly housing payments.**

The legislature is withholding **\$339 million** that was meant to keep Michigan families safely in their homes.

Unemployed Workers

Governor Whitmer's plan includes a restoration of unemployment benefits back to 26 weeks. As of March 2021, there are approximately **16,000 active unemployment claims in Muskegon County, 3,200 in Newaygo County, and 2,000 in Oceana County.**

All three counties in District 34 have unemployment rates higher than the state average:

- 8.9% unemployment in Saginaw County, up from 4.4% in January 2020
- 7% unemployment in Newaygo County, up from 4.7% in January 2020
- 9.8% unemployment in Oceana County, up from 7.6% in January 2020

Unemployed workers in District 34 could receive **\$2,172 more in benefits** if the Legislature restored the program back to 26 weeks.

Families Needing Food

Even before the pandemic began, many families in District 34 needed help to buy enough food.

- In Muskegon County, 61% of K-12 students receive free or reduced price school lunches. 66% of children ages 4 and under receive WIC assistance.
- In Newaygo County, 62% of K-12 students receive free or reduced price school lunches. 55% of children ages 4 and under receive WIC assistance.
- In Oceana County, 71% of K-12 students receive free or reduced price school lunches. 77% of children ages 4 and under receive WIC assistance.

Michigan food banks and community food pantries have reported massive increases in the number of people needing help due to the pandemic. Many of those needing food assistance in District 34 have never used a food bank or food pantry before.

The Legislature is still sitting on **\$2.1 billion** in federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding that would help these families and others in Michigan who continue to struggle to afford food because of the pandemic.