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WHO: WESTERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

WHAT: **ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE WESTERVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE'S SUPPORT OF ISSUE, THE 6.71 MILL SUBSTITUTE EMERGENCY LEVY FOR THE WESTERVILLE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

The Westerville Area Chamber of Commerce ("Chamber") announces its support for the November 8th Substitute Emergency School Levy based on a unanimous vote from its Board of Trustees. The Chamber Board considered the matter on a recommendation of the Chamber's Government Relations Committee ("the Committee").

The Chamber's support is based on a realization of the District's current and projected financial position, the value of a vibrant school system to the business community, and the understanding that the District is committed to implementing initiatives to achieve excellence in educational services in the most cost effective manner. Efforts to lower operating costs while implementing previously cut programs in response to community input and needs has continued to prepare our students for the next phase of their education and/or careers plans. What we have noted are:

1. Programs that were cut prior to the last levy, that have been reinstated, have been restructured to produce high quality educational benefits. Many of the programs have been creatively implemented without a need to come back to voters for more money and in some areas actually reducing operational costs.
2. In an effort to control the largest percentage of operating costs, employee compensation and benefits, the district has negotiated employment terms regarding work rules, compensation, benefit offerings and employee benefit contributions that better correlate with those being received by District taxpayers in private sector employment.
3. The District pursued cost savings through the competitive bidding request for proposal (RFP) process for various service areas, including payroll, janitorial and grounds maintenance. A task force that included qualified business representatives was established. Through this community input, recommendations and considerations of service terms was gained.

The Chamber's support is given with the expectation that the District will;

- Continue to focus on maintaining and reducing where possible negotiated employment terms relating to work rules, compensation, benefit offerings and employee contributions. Making this a standard business practice to review the way the schools are operating and be a leader in making changes that improve employee productivity and to hold the line on the cost to educate will move our district forward and make the best use of our tax payer dollar.
- Continue and even grow the efforts to develop class curriculum addressing job skills needed from the business community. Actively seek input in what businesses need to fill the workforce needs they are projecting.

Additionally, the Chamber expresses its support of the levy now rather than waiting for the levy to expire in December 2017. The Real Property Tax Rollback in affect today on this levy is tied to this levy since it was approved in 2012. If the levy renews taxpayers will continue to receive the 10% credit and 2.5% owner-occupied credit. Any new or replacement levies taxpayers will not receive the state funded property tax rollback credit,

With these expectations, the Chamber encourages its members and District residents to support Issue 59 Substitute Emergency levy on the November 8th Emergency Levy.

The Westerville Area Chamber of Commerce has more than 610 members representing various business and community interests. For 48 years, Chamber members have united to enhance the community's quality of life and the

economic, civic and cultural growth of the Westerville Area. A volunteer organization representing the business community, the Chamber is a private, nonprofit, tax-paying corporation. It unites hundreds of businesses, professionals and individuals, creating a unique organization that works to improve business and build an even stronger community. The Chamber includes people just like you, who realize that collectively, through a business organization, they can accomplish more than what one can do individually. The strength of the Chamber lies in its members, creating a pool of resources from which ideas, creativity and finances flow. It has created programs that solicit new businesses, retain existing ones and improve the economic climate and quality of life in Westerville. The Chamber serves as the collective voice of the business community, advocating for pro-business issues. It is comprised of 11 active committees focusing on the Chamber's mission of "Enhancing the business climate and quality life in our community."

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