



A2YChamber
ANN ARBOR / YPSILANTI REGIONAL CHAMBER

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Ahead of the Governor's FY 2015 budget proposal, the Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti (A2Y) Regional Chamber's Board of Directors has approved a statement calling for a significant increase in funding for higher education.

"We heard from organizations in support and opposition to increased higher education funding. The business case for increased funding of higher education is strong," said Doug McClure, chair of the A2Y Chamber Public Policy Committee. He added, "We need increased funding to get us back on track to previous funding levels so that our state university system can continue to serve as an engine of economic growth."

A2Y Chamber President Diane Keller said, "Ensuring our public universities have the funding they need is a vital step not just for our students, but for the business community they will soon lead. This is the right move for our chamber members, our community and our state." The Chamber's entire statement can be read below. For further inquiries contact Andy LaBarre at (734) 214-0101 or andy@a2ychamber.org.

**Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber
Statement Supporting Increased State of Michigan Higher Education Funding
January 23, 2014**

The Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti (A2Y) Regional Chamber encourages Governor Snyder and the State Legislature to significantly increase state funding for higher education in the FY 2015 budget.

For broad and sustainable economic growth and opportunities, our state must properly value and fund education at all levels. These include the areas of early childhood education, K-12, and higher education. The A2Y Chamber joined other business groups last year to advocate for increased early childhood funding. We were pleased the Legislature passed, and Gov. Snyder signed such funding into law. They should now take that approach with higher education.

Michigan's public universities are engines of our future growth, and Michigan cannot afford to continue the steady reductions in state funding for higher education that have occurred since the turn of this century. We are now funding our 21st century public universities at much less than 20th century levels: \$1.26 billion in 2013 compared to \$1.6 billion in 2001. In just a decade, we have gone from funding roughly half of our public universities' budgets to less than a quarter. And during this period the average tuition at our state universities has more than doubled, reducing access to higher education and increasing student and parent debt.

At the A2Y Chamber's Impact 2013, Lou Glazer of Michigan Future, Inc., a respected Ann Arbor based non-partisan, non-profit think tank, demonstrated the proven correlation between the numbers of college educated individuals a community retains and its chances of economic success. To achieve this success, we must reverse the defunding trend and increase our public investment in higher education.

We have lost a decade's worth (compounded to over \$2.5B) of investment in our state's higher education and the future of our economy. We must begin to rebuild what was lost. The best way to do this is to increase funding for higher education. At the same time, our public universities must continue their efforts towards greater cost efficiencies and delivering a more affordable educational product by proactively and consistently exploring and implementing ways to keep tuition affordable for Michigan residents.