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### **A Titanic Mistake**

On this 100<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, it is important that we remember and learn from such a tragic event in history. Many are fascinated by these dramatic moments of human tragedy due to the easily avoidable circumstances which yielded such catastrophic results. This famous mistake is a prime example of how unsuspecting people blindly depend on the strong stewardship of their captain and his crew, while erroneously assuming they were standing on the epitome of safe travel. Unfortunately, as the historical records show, the decisions of the captain turned out to be irresponsible and reckless, which culminated into the incomprehensible sinking of the unsinkable.

It is uncanny how such a monumental mistake of human errors mirrors the events we see today unfolding at our Capitol. The State of Illinois has been sinking in financial ruin for years due to various factors and questionable leadership decisions of our stewards. Now, our current captain and crew have to figure out a plan to keep us afloat while deciding who will be sacrificed to save a ship stewarded straight into financial oblivion.

Obviously, it is not easy to decide who will be saved in lifeboats and who will be sacrificed in trying to save this sinking ship. Unfortunately, there are some leaders at our Capitol who believe that it would be a good idea if we sacrifice our children's education as a reasonable response to the financial crisis, almost as though these school-aged kids were the cause for this disaster and are now being punished.

Consequently, there is a current proposal being considered by our legislators that would completely *devastate* our State's already underfunded public school system. This proposal is the restructuring of the General State Aid formula. The impact on your children's education, no matter where you live in Sangamon County, will be enormously affected. In addition, the State plans on not fulfilling their obligation of funding their public schools by prorating and skipping their final payments to the schools for this fiscal year. Seriously, who just does not pay for financial obligations and gets away with it?

As an example, this "financial solution" could equate to almost \$1 million LESS funding per year for just Williamsville-Sherman Schools. All told, Sangamon County schools collectively would LOSE close to \$11.7 million dollars next year and possibly every year thereafter. That means \$11.7 million less revenue than what our county schools received this current school year...and several districts have already been cutting programs and educational services for the past several years just to stay afloat.

Although we were lucky enough to not have been on the Titanic that fateful night, we can only imagine how helpless people must have felt. Through it all, I am certain though, that no one even uttered a suggestion that children be sacrificed with the ship. There is no way, that as adults, we would get in a life boat while watching our kids sink.

A hundred years ago people were smart enough to put children first, why not now?