

Hello State Representatives:

I am writing in support of Rep Pabon's proposal to create a sales tax holiday for the purpose of easing the financial burden of purchasing school supplies.

The State of Colorado provides school districts with a paltry sum per student, forcing schools to play an elaborate shell game each year to determine funding priorities. Many schools opt to have families to provide school supplies for their children as a way to open up budgeted funds. I support that money going towards staff versus supplies, but the consequences of those choices are more disproportionately felt by families who are of lower income.

I have three children, and two will be in elementary school in 2014-15. To give you a sense of the school supplies requested by my "only" moderate-poverty level Denver Public School, which has 39% Free and Reduced Lunch families, the following items are included in mandatory supply lists:

#### Kindergarten

- Glue stick
- Backpack
- Crayola brand crayons 24 ct
- Crayola brand markers, classic colors
- 2x Elmers brand school glue
- box of tissues
- 2x paper towels
- bottle hand soap
- bottle hand sanitizer
- Fiskars brand scissors
- Dixon Ticonderoga brand pencils
- disinfecting surface wipes
- pack of household cleaning sponges
- optional: spoons, forks, bandages, two sizes of Ziploc bags, paper lunch bags, napkins, paper plates, paper cups

#### Third grade

- 72 #2 pencils
- 2 Mead brand composition books
- 6 2-pocket folders
- 4 boxes of tissues
- 2 rolls paper towels
- Lysol brand disinfecting wipes
- bandages
- 2 packs of Expo brand dry erase markers
- colored pencils 12-24 ct
- crayons 24-36 ct
- markers 8-16 ct
- highlighter
- 2 reams copy paper
- backpack
- pearl eraser
- Ziplock bags

- optional: zippered pencil pouch, soprano recorder (music),
- standard sized sticky notes, hand held pencil sharpener, liquid hand soap

If a family does not have the time to search every sales flyer in the area and run out to each store that has a sale on a few (but never all) items that week, you will end up paying a premium. For the above list, the mandatory items on the kindergarten list purchased from Walmart would cost you over \$50; third grade over \$135. A family like mine would be paying close to \$200 just in mandatory school supplies pre-tax; an onerous burden for the nearly 4 in 10 families in my children's school whose income does not extend to even feeding their children lunch!

Due to this shuffle game of choosing staffing over school supplies, families end up paying more when items are bought individually than by the case or in bulk, as can be done when a school provides supplies. For example: reams of paper are approximately \$6 each; when bought by the pallet (400 reams), prices drop to \$3 each.

In addition to mitigating the double burden of under-funded schools and higher-cost-per-item, a school supply tax holiday would also encourage Colorado families to shop, knowing they will be receiving a "savings" from the exclusion of sales tax.

The school supply tax holiday should also apply to items of clothing including foot wear up to \$100 per item, computers (up to \$1000), printers, and calculators to boost our state's STEM knowledge, books and other reference materials up to \$50.

Please let Colorado join the sixteen other states that give working families a break on tax purchases as part of a "school supply tax holiday."

Sincerely,

Anne Spires DeLong  
homemaker,  
mother to three children, ages 2, 5, and 8  
PTA Secretary at Edison Elementary in DPS