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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

YOUSEF RABHI
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

President Rose Bellanca
Board of Trustees
Washtenaw Community College
4800 E. Huron River Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

Dear President Bellanca and Members of the Board of Trustees,

We write to you on behalf of the concerned constituents in House Districts 52, 53, 54, and 55 and Senate District 18 to express our strong reservations over the proposal to privatize WCC's Information Technology services through an agreement with Ellucian.

As we understand it, the proposal, if approved by the board, would outsource the entirety of the college's Information Technology services, support staff, and management to the Virginia-based company as part of a \$5.2 million fixed-cost annual contract. The announcement issued by the College claims this partnership will result in around \$600,000 dollars in annual savings. However, given that WCC draws significant financial support from an 0.85 mil millage (the renewal of which was overwhelmingly approved by members of our community in 2016), we are troubled that millions of dollars of financial support provided by our community would be sent out of state.

Furthermore, we implore you to consider the 31 full-time WCC staff members who will be impacted by this decision. We believe that the savings this partnership promises do not outweigh the significant costs that come with privatization. Dedicated staff members have a long-term commitment to the college that adds value beyond the fiscal year. Once the college becomes dependent on an outside vendor to accomplish the routine, everyday tasks of an IT department, the costs will rise and service quality will suffer.

We have seen countless examples showing that the privatization of IT services ultimately proves ineffectual. When public entities outsource IT services to the private sector, they are giving up oversight over staffing and quality control. When cost-savings decisions ultimately result in poor quality, inadequate staffing, and lack of oversight, the public ends up footing the bill. Reliable IT services are crucial to a 21st century education, and students deserve an IT department that is accountable to them rather than to a bottom line.

Neither the administration nor Ellucian has been able to guarantee that these 31 dedicated employees will be retained at their current salaries and benefits, only that salaries are expected to be competitive with market rates. These IT department members, who joined the WCC staff because of the College's tremendous reputation in the community and its recognition for education innovation, deserve to be treated fairly.

Additionally, given the importance of the WCC's IT staff and resources to the success of the United Association's and the Iron Workers' annual training events, we are concerned about whether these events – and others like them – would be jeopardized by the contract with Ellucian.

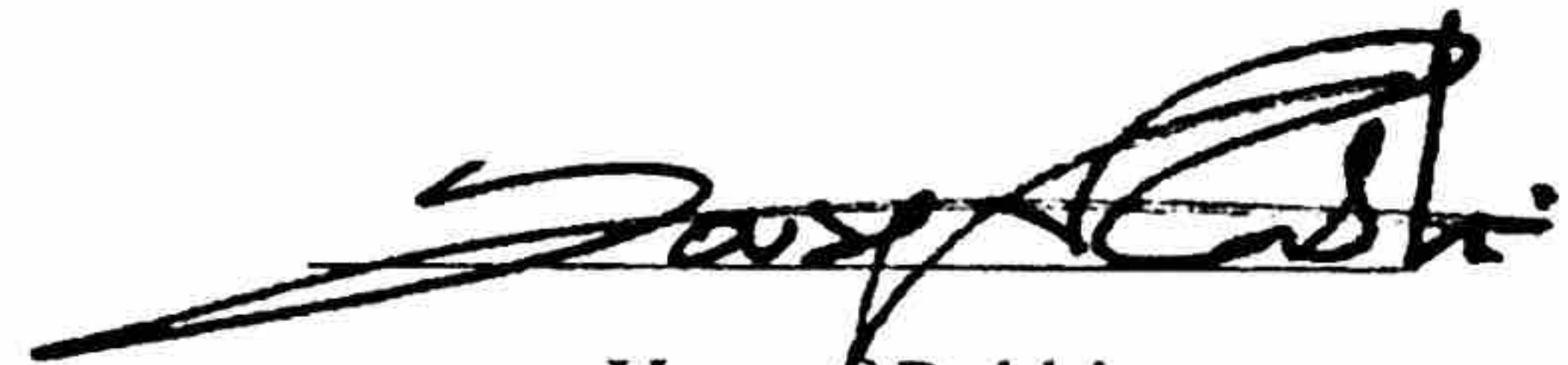
The board's primary obligation is to its students, faculty, and staff. This proposal would place these students, faculty, and staff in the hands of an out-of-state private company that has little understanding of the WCC campus and community. Ellucian has a record of previous service shutdowns in Michigan, as well as disturbing incidents of discrimination including settling a finding of discrimination against a transgender employee by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission for \$140,000.

We implore the board to consider our concerns as well as the concerns of the community and staff members who have presented public comment.

Sincerely,



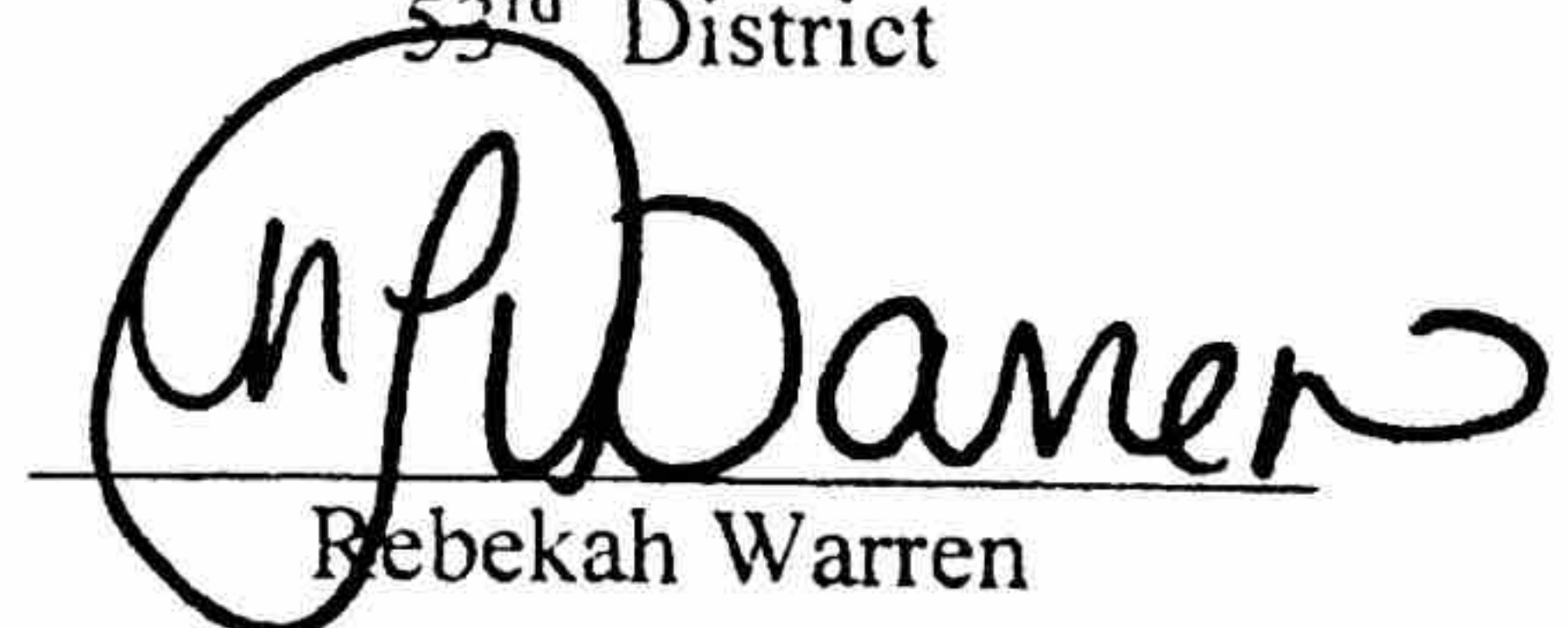
Donna Lasinski
State Representative
52nd District




Yousef Rabhi
State Representative
53rd District



Ronnie Peterson
State Representative
54rd District



Rebekah Warren
State Representative
55th District



Jeff Irwin
State Senator
18th District