

# TWO EDITORIALS, TWO RESPONSES

I WANT TO commend the *Daily News* on its editorial, "Hite and Sink," which accurately captures the challenges facing the Philadelphia School District. My Council colleagues and I understand that Philadelphia schools are in a funding crisis, and we understand that Harrisburg (which has overseen Philadelphia schools for over a decade) is the party most responsible for that crisis. City Council has been working closely with our state delegation to support their efforts to convince the governor to stand up for our schoolchildren.

But while Gov. Corbett may choose to turn his back on our children, Philadelphia's leaders must rise to the challenge. Given this funding crisis, I do not think this is the time to dole out the tens of millions of dollars in property and use-and-occupancy tax breaks that AVI will deliver to the

city's biggest businesses. Under the Use and Occupancy reform legislation that I have proposed, we could reduce these tax breaks, protect the city's small businesses and commercial corridors, and provide our schools with the resources they need to open their doors in September. Some members of the business community will call this a tax hike, but for a vast majority of these businesses we are simply asking them to accept less of a tax cut.

As your editorial correctly states, this is a stop-gap measure, not a solution to our public-education struggles. But it is vital that the city, state, school district and teachers union, come together and face this crisis. Philadelphia's voters should pay attention to how our leaders respond as we look to the 2014 elections.

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