

## Snyder signs state budget, touts it as national standard for fiscal soundness and efficiency

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**LANSING -- Gov. Rick Snyder signed a new \$46-billion budget into law Tuesday, but said the state won't enforce controversial budget provisions banning medical benefits for university employees' unmarried partners and requiring universities to file annual state reports on their stem cell research.**

Without specifically mentioning either provision, Snyder made it clear they are not legally enforceable and won't be required by his administration.

He said such requirements express the Legislature's intent but are not binding. The provisions were added to the budget bills by lawmakers who demanded more state oversight of stem cell medical research using embryos, and those who believed granting domestic-partner benefits for same-sex couples violates the Michigan marriage amendment and would be too costly.

Separate legislation to block domestic-partner benefits by public employers has been introduced in the state House; a similar approach on stem cell research is likely. State employees are among the public employees eligible for unmarried partner health benefits.

Asked whether he would support those bills, Snyder said, "It's hypothetical."

Flanked by 27 Republican lawmakers and no Democrats, Snyder said the 2011-12 budget sets a national standard for its fast enactment -- it's the state's earliest budget completion since Ronald Reagan was president in the 1980s -- and for fiscal soundness.

Snyder said the balanced budget will foster a more stable [business](#) environment that will produce more jobs and avoid deficits for future generations. He said the budget makes minimal cuts to schools and preserves Medicaid services and early childhood programs.

"This is a jobs budget. This is a kids' budget," he said.

Democrats disagreed. House Minority Leader Richard Hammel, D-Flushing, said the new budget will damage schools in the name of big tax cuts for [businesses](#). "This budget process has moved far too quickly, and the plan signed by the governor is risky for the state's long-term economic growth," Hammel said in a statement. "Just because you turn your test in early doesn't mean you're going to get a good grade."

The \$12.7-billion School Aid Fund will give \$300 per pupil less to school districts - a 2.2% reduction from this year. Districts that show cost-cutting initiatives could get more money from a \$100-million pool.

Public universities will absorb a 22% cut in state aid -- 15% if they hold down tuition costs to 7% or less -- and there will be \$100 million less for local communities.

Snyder said the budget required tough choices. He praised Republican legislative leaders and said Democrats had "great input" that shaped the final budget plan.

"We are in difficult economic times, and we had to make difficult choices to make this budget work," he said. "That was not easy. We know we are asking for sacrifice from people, and we know there are people out there suffering."