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She singles out state Rep. Jan Dolan, R-Farmington Hills, who voted for the bill.

"What was arrogant was Jan Dolan, after hearing what the voters in her district had to say, she decides she knows what's best for the people in her district," Barnett said.

"Then she gets mad when (educators) fight back. Politics is something where we don't say, 'Let's turn the other cheek...'"

Responded Dolan: "You can tell her Al Short, the chief lobbyist for the MEA (Michigan Education Association), along with Debbie Stabenow, the Democrat running for governor, were the ones who initiated it."

Barnett's passion on the topic spills over into proselytizing. Serving as the Democratic party chairwoman for the 11th Congressional District, a Republican stronghold, might explain why.

She said she moved to Farmington Hills for the schools. Her oldest child, Samantha, 9, attends Beechview Elementary while Jordan, 8½, goes to Highmeadow Common Campus.

News of the bill July 21 riled her into action. Since then, Barnett has been meeting with groups such as the Gray Panthers and Parent Teacher Organizations and coordinating efforts outside for the petition drive.

It's more than Barnett bargained for. She had just finished her master's degree in business and was looking to take things a little easy.

"I just wanted to stay home and cook soup," she said.

"Those of us who are working to resolve the issue have been working very hard. There are some out there who are not part of the process and have not been contributing to resolving the problem."

*Rep. Jan Dolan
R-Farmington Hills*

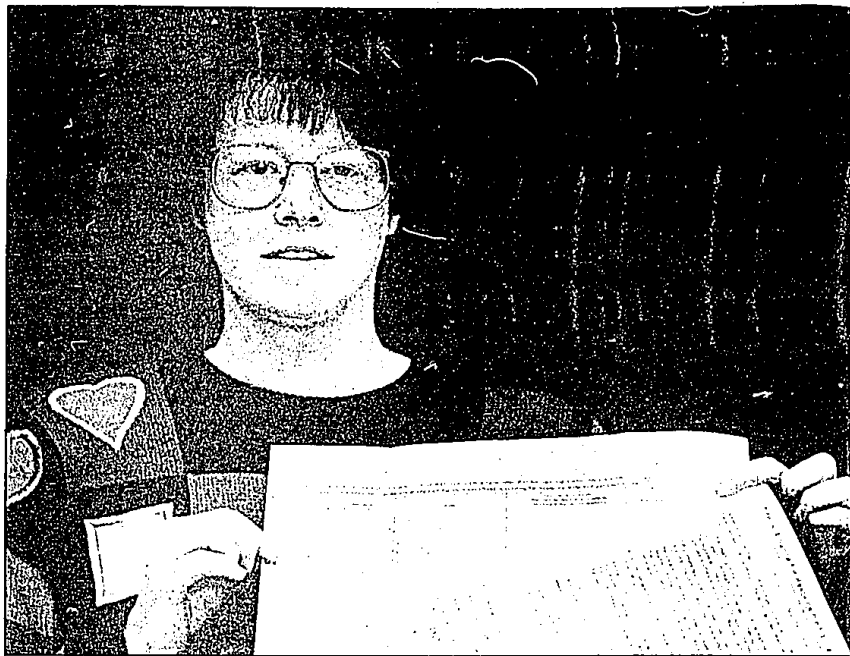
But, she thinks lawmakers are in the soup over Senate Bill 1. She doesn't think they weighed all of its effects: elimination of tax increment financing for downtown development authorities and cutbacks in adult education.

"Now they're down to 43 days to solve a problem they haven't been able to solve in 23 years," Barnett said.

Dolan said she's confident a plan will be in place by the end of the year.

"Those of us who are working to resolve the issue have been working very hard," Dolan said. "There are some out there who are not part of the process and have not been contributing to resolving the problem."

"If we would have stayed business as usual, it would not have happened. That's what they are talking about going back to business as usual. Business as usual will hurt the out-of-formula districts."



SHARON LEMIEUX/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Sign up story: Farmington Hills' Vicki Barnett shows the petitions she hopes will delay the effects of Senate Bill 1.

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33825 Grand River, Farmington
Thursday, November 25, at 10:30 a.m.

- No Collection Will Be Taken
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