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TROY

## A BEE TO REMEMBER



TIM THOMPSON PHOTOS — THE OAKLAND PRESS

Divya Aggarwal, from Smith Middle School in Troy, receives her trophy from Don Wyatt, Vice President of News for Digital First Media, after winning the 21st Annual Oakland Press Spelling Bee held at the Oakland Schools building in Waterford. On the right is runner-up Amogh Gowday from Baker Middle School.

OAKLAND COUNTY

## Congressman: Government can't 'bully' states into Common Core

By Anne Runkle  
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A congressman from Oakland County says long-awaited legislation passed late last year prevents the federal government from "bullying" states into following the Common Core curriculum standards.

U.S. Rep. Mike Bishop, a Republican whose district includes Rochester, Rochester Hills and much of north Oakland County, says the Every Student Succeeds Act prevents the federal government from coercing states into following any set of curriculum standards.

ESSA was said to be a replacement for the No Child Left Behind law, which was criticized for using a one-size-fits-all approach to fixing poorly performing schools. Educators praised ESSA, which President Barack Obama signed in December, for giving power back to states to decide how best to educate their students.



Bishop

Bishop, who sits on the House Education and Workforce Committee, says that he frequently hears complaints from parents about Common Core.

"I must say, as a parent, I agree with their concerns," he said in recent remarks made to John King Jr., acting secretary of the federal Department of Education.

Opponents have equated the standards with a nationalization of the educational system and blasted them as substandard. Some conservatives also say they push a liberal bias on children.

The Michigan Legislature adopted Common Core and it was implemented in 2010. Michigan is one of more than 40 states that follow the standards.

Kelli Ford, a spokeswoman for Bishop, says ESSA gives the state Legislature the power to create its own standards.

Educators and legislators have said that parents could see some changes as a result of ESSA within a short time, while other changes could take years to implement.

## 80 county champions compete in Oakland Press Spelling Bee

By Diana Dillaber Murray  
 For The Oakland Press

Divya Aggarwal, 13, out-spelled 79 other Oakland County local school champions Sunday to win the Oakland Press Regional Spelling Bee and a free trip to Washington D.C. To compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee in May.

The Troy Smith Middle School eighth grader, who came in third place in 2015, was so determined to do better this year that she studied three hours a day leading up to the event that is sponsored by The Oakland Press and Oakland Schools intermediate district.

Amogh Gowda, 14, an eighth grader at Troy Baker Middle School, was runner-up in the contest and Kristen D'Souza, Rochester Van Hoosen Middle School came in third place.

The contest narrowed to two after Kristin misspelled "garni-  
**BEE » PAGE 4**



Half of the contestants in the 21st Annual Oakland Press Spelling Bee held at the Oakland Schools building in Waterford.

REGION

## Flint debate draws crowds from across state

By Carol Hopkins  
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Distance didn't deter Bob and Jo Bird of Holland from attending Sunday evening's Democratic debate between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders in Flint.

They arrived so early, they had to bide their time at the nearby Flint Institute of Arts. "We're interested in how the

candidates feel about education," said Jo Bird, a 63-year-old retired teacher who has been politically active since the mid-1970s.

"I know (Clinton) doesn't bash public schools."

The debate was held in advance of Michigan voters heading to the polls for the state's Presidential primary Tuesday.

Scores of police surrounded the venue for the Sunday debate — The Whiting, a 2,043-

seat auditorium.

Bob Bird, 65, said he's concerned Republicans want to "do away with the middle class. They're talking about that legislation that would hurt the elderly and Social Security."

Jo Bird compared the March 3 spirited GOP debate in Detroit to "ninth grade boys in a locker room."

Irma Dunton drove to the debate with daughter, Stefanie  
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CAROL HOPKINS — THE OAKLAND PRESS

Jo and Bob Bird check the printout they received to give them entry into the Flint Democratic Debate between Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders.

**Opponents have equated the standards with a nationalization of the educational system and blasted them as substandard. Some conservatives also say they push a liberal bias on children.**

PHOTO GALLERIES

**We shoot photos each week at local events**

On Friday we stopped by the Michigan Golf Show in Novi.  
[MEDIA.THEOAKLANDPRESS.COM](http://MEDIA.THEOAKLANDPRESS.COM)



TWITTER

**On the attempted pigeon drop scam**

Sue Vanderwill (@SueVanderwill): "#thestruggleisreal Be aware, spread the word."

FACEBOOK

**On plans to remodel certain Meijer stores**

Will Yogus: "How come they're not remodeling the Waterford Meijer? That location desperately needs it."

TWITTER

**On upcoming March Madness**

@patcaputo98 @MSU\_Basketball Everyone knows that it is that time of year again! It is the month of #Izzo "