



December 14, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President-elect of the United States of America
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

RE: Nomination of the U.S. Secretary of Education

Dear President-elect Biden:

The State of California is playing a unique role in your choice of an Education Secretary, with Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President of our State Board of Education, leading your education transition team. As members of the State Assembly Republican Caucus, we are writing to strongly urge against the nomination of former National Education Association (NEA) president Lily Eskelsen Garcia or current American Federation of Teachers (AFT) president Randi Weingarten. We understand that both are under consideration and want to express our opposition to either choice.

America's public education system continues to be plagued by low student achievement, particularly among low-income students of color. The urgent need to improve public education has never been clearer. Yet both prospective nominees are openly hostile to proven tools for closing persistent achievement gaps: parental choice and public charter schools.

Across America, 3.3 million students are enrolled in public charter schools — 70 percent of whom are Black or Latino. It is well established that President Barack Obama significantly expanded public charter schools during the Obama-Biden Administration. In fact, public charter schools enjoyed bipartisan support until the NEA and AFT launched a disinformation campaign against these public schools because many of their teachers are not a source of revenue for those union conglomerates. We prefer an approach that puts the needs of students ahead of special interests.

Our constituents of all backgrounds choose a public charter school when they decide it's the best option for their children. Yet Eskelsen Garcia called public charter schools "misguided reforms," and the union she formerly led has fought to close public charter schools across the country. The impact of these efforts is devastating: parents are deprived

of choice and children are forced back into failing neighborhood schools. Jeanne Allen, president and CEO of the Center for Education Reform, recently cautioned against Eskelsen Garcia's policy positions stating, "She has compared choice for poor kids to 'snake oil,' and argued 'everything about school choice leaves students in the cold.'"

California serves a diverse student population and oversees a vast network of public schools, including over 1,300 public charter schools. We believe parents should have the right to choose the school that best fits their child's educational needs. Nominating a Secretary of Education who does not share these values is sure to trigger a confirmation battle in the Senate.

For these reasons, we strongly oppose the nomination of Lily Eskelsen Garcia or Randi Weingarten to lead the Department of Education.

Sincerely,



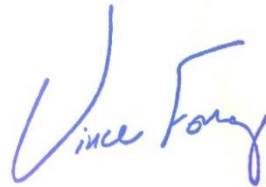
Kevin Kiley
Assemblymember, 6th District



Frank Bigelow
Assemblymember, 5th District



Tom Lackey
Assemblymember, 36th District



Vince Fong
Assemblymember, 34th District



Devon Mathis
Assemblymember, 26th District



Megan Dahle
Assemblymember, 1st District



Steven S. Choi
Assemblymember, 68th District



Jim Patterson
Assemblymember, 23rd District



Randy Voepel
Assemblymember, 71st District



Janet Nguyen
Assemblymember, 72nd District



Marie Waldron
Assemblymember, 75th District



James Gallagher
Assemblymember, 3rd District



Kelly Seyarto
Assemblymember, 67th District



Laurie Davies
Assemblymember, 73rd District



Thurston Smith
Assemblymember, 33rd District



Heath Flora
Assemblymember, 12th District

Cc: Dr. Linda Darling-Hammond, President, California State Board of Education
U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
U.S. Representative Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader