

July 3, 2010

## **PURE Supports Amendment #2 on HR4899 of July 1**



Dear President Obama:

We at PURE were very sorry to hear that you have threatened to veto Congressman Obey's proposal to use funds previously committed to the Race to the Top and other programs in order to save teacher jobs.

We know that you support funding jobs for teachers. However, we strongly disagree with your opposition to paying for this initiative with funds previously allocated for Race To the Top (RTTT) strategies, teacher pay-for-performance programs, and charter school expansion.

While you characterize these strategies as “sweeping reforms,” we believe that they are unproven, reckless, wasteful experiments which put our most vulnerable children at risk. In fact, we would like to see all the funding for these programs cut unless and until they have developed a true track record of success rather than simply a modestly effective public relations campaign.

We have seen the damage of Mr. Duncan's RTTT-style initiatives first hand here in Chicago where they

- destroyed neighborhood schools, weakening already challenged communities,
- ramped up the misuse of biased and uninformative standardized tests,
- expanded the numbers of students who are pushed out of schools,
- increased the marginalization of parents in their own children's education,
- privatized public education, a fundamental civil right which should be open, accessible, and accountable to the public, and
- ultimately wasted billions of precious education dollars that could have been spent actually improving the schools we have using proven methods such as holistic reform, lower class sizes, teacher empowerment, and increased parent involvement.

We see the Obey amendment as a win-win situation. It will help save tens of thousands of teaching jobs at a time when the economic recovery is in serious danger of stalling. In addition, it will help slow what we feel is a reckless rush to close and privatize more schools, disempower parents and teachers, and increase, not decrease, the focus on standardized testing.

Please reconsider your threatened veto. Thank you, and have a wonderful Independence Day (it's also my older son's birthday!).

Best and warmest wishes,

Julie Woestehoff  
Executive Director

## **Parents United for Responsible Education**

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