

BOBACK NEEDS TO STAND WITH PARENTS, NOT THE TEACHERS' UNION

Dear Editor,

Pennsylvania has more teacher-union strikes than the other 49 states combined! That not only hurts our children but it diminishes respect for our teachers. The saddest part is that it doesn't need to be this way. There is a bill in the PA House of Representatives right now that would ensure that every child in Pennsylvania receives a strike-free education, but it is going to take support from legislators all across the state to look past money from special interest groups and focus on the real goal – making sure Pennsylvania's children are receiving a "thorough and efficient system of public education" as required by the Pennsylvania Constitution.

Last year, State Representative Karen Boback received \$9,200 from the Pennsylvania State Education Association Teachers' Union. The PSEA gives the vast majority of its money to liberal Democrats, but Karen Boback received more PSEA money than 97% of all Republicans in the House. This is quite troublesome to most Republicans. This does, however, provide Representative Boback with a unique opportunity as it pertains to the Lake-Lehman Teacher Strike.

Because Karen Boback lives in the Lake-Lehman school district, I'm certain that she is well aware of the outrage at the teachers' union over their decision to strike. The thousands of PSEA dollars pouring into her campaign cannot begin to silence the anger of the parents and the taxpayers in her district. Now as a State Representative, Karen Boback has a choice: to side with the teachers' union that helped finance her campaign, or side with the parents in her district. Because she is being bankrolled by the PSEA, Karen Boback has been given a platform from which she can have a direct impact on the PSEA's decision to strike. Karen Boback has said that striking is a teacher's "right". She is simply wrong. A quality education for our children supersedes the supposed right of a teacher to strike.

I am asking Representative Boback to demonstrate that she is not beholden to the special interest money of the union that is bankrolling her campaign. I am asking Representative Boback to demonstrate that she values the education of children more than she values her relationship with this union. This can be done in two ways:

First, publicly condemn this liberal union, and their decision to strike. The upheaval this is causing families mandates that she do nothing less. As a resident of the Lake-Lehman school district who has received thousands of dollars from the PSEA, she has both an obligation to speak out and a platform from which to be heard. She needs to side with her constituents, not with the union.

Second, address the root of the problem and fundamentally change the combative system that pits teachers against school boards in the first place. Sign House Bill 1369 which will outlaw teacher strikes in Pennsylvania and would replace the current antagonistic system with a cooperative focus on what everyone really wants – a quality education for our children. In so doing, she will demonstrate that she has the courage and conviction to stand up for what is right, even when she receives money from those who do not, and Pennsylvania will join the 37 other states that have already banned teachers' strikes.

However, should she choose to side with this all-too powerful, liberal union over both the taxpayers in her district and the children in the Lake-Lehman school district, she will demonstrate that she needs to be replaced by the voters in 2008.

James May

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