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September 24, 2014

Assembly  
California Legislature



ROGER DICKINSON  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SEVENTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES  
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JUDICIARY

SUBCOMMITTEES  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #1,  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

SELECT COMMITTEE  
CHAIR: DELINQUENCY PREVENTION  
AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Ms. Katrina Abston  
Head of Schools  
California Virtual Academies  
2360 Shasta Way, Unit A  
Simi Valley, CA 93065

Dear Katrina Abston and CAVA administration,

I am very troubled to hear that California Virtual Academies (CAVA) continues its efforts to disenfranchise certificated faculty by opposing their legally protected right to organize a union. As you know, charter schools in the state of California are obligated to follow a number of laws and regulations that are meant to protect California students, as well as an educators' ability to teach without fear of repercussions. CAVA teachers' efforts to correct the many problems at CAVA and ensure public resources are dedicated to student instruction should be met with support and collaboration, not legal delays and punishment.

I am especially concerned that educators who are exercising their rights to organize have been subject to discipline and termination. Not only are such actions prohibited under state labor laws, they raise serious concerns about why CAVA is so aggressively opposing teachers' efforts to improve standards for CAVA's students throughout California. I believe CAVA should immediately rescind all disciplinary action taken against CAVA teachers—in particular union activists Danielle Hodge and Stacey Preach—and commit to respecting teachers' legal rights to unionize.

Finally, I am worried that CAVA has recorded poor student performance across the board in recent years, a fact that is connected to the high level of teacher turnover and the large student to teacher ratios at the school. I am worried that many of these performance issues are connected to the large amount of public resources that are sent out of state to K-12 Inc., a for profit educational management company. I believe students would be better served if public resources stayed in their classrooms. I believe you should work with your frontline teachers to identify ways to prioritize student learning.

I urge you to respect CAVA teachers' decision to unionize and begin bargaining in good faith. I believe you should rescind disciplinary action against union activists Danielle Hodge and Stacey Preach. I will continue to watch closely and am prepared to investigate further as I continue to hear credible concerns about misuse of public resources in your schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RD", with a long, sweeping underline.

Roger Dickinson  
Assemblymember, 7th District

