

November 4, 2021

Mr. Joe Guillen
Executive Director
New Mexico School Boards Association
300 Galisteo Street, Suite 204
Santa Fe, NM 87501

We the undersigned concerned New Mexico organizations, school board members, and 35 state legislators request your prompt attention in the matter regarding the September 29th letter from the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to the Biden Administration. We are deeply concerned about the future of education in New Mexico. We support excellence in education, a positive work environment where teachers are valued and effective, expanded opportunities for students, and active and involved parents (primary stakeholders) who are supported and encouraged by their school district in the education of their children.

Because of the recent message and actions by the NSBA, we urge the New Mexico School Boards Association to reconsider its relationship with the NSBA. This might include withdrawing its membership/affiliation with NSBA or it might consider a letter of concern on your part to the NSBA.

Our concern is regarding the letter sent by NSBA to President Biden which falsely claimed that school boards were “under an immediate threat” from attendees of local school board meetings across the United States. This letter also requested that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other agencies, initiate the investigation of parents and stakeholders, citing news articles about, in the association’s own words, “extremist hate organizations showing up at school board meetings.”

Examples given by the NSBA are actually very different than represented. The NSBA’s letter gives an example about the arrest of a very frustrated father from Virginia whose ninth-grade daughter was sexually assaulted in a school bathroom by a newly identified transgender male. This student was transferred to another school where he committed a similar assault. The father’s frustrations stemmed from officials’ repeated negligence and inaction.

The Association’s letter is filled with the labeling of parents and stakeholders as domestic terrorists, with no evidence to justify that term. The reality is that parents and stakeholders are beyond frustration with being ignored by education policymakers. The NSBA fails to recognize that Americans are angered with what is happening in our classrooms, especially here in New Mexico where the “basics” of educating our children remain elusive.

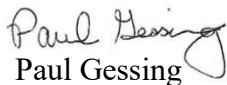
After immense public pressure, the NSBA issued an apology regarding their letter. Unfortunately this letter comes a little too late. The NSBA already revealed their desires, making this apology seem insincere and forced. The apology from the NSBA in no way changes the need for the NMSBA to reconsider its relationship with NSBA.

Attorney General Merrick Garland's subsequent memorandum indulging NSBA's attempt to intimidate these parents is a slap in the face. This federal-school board partnership to smear engaged citizens has already served to increase tensions at school board meetings and ultimately will chill the ability of those citizens to freely petition their government, a constitutional right, without fear of reprisal.

Numerous school board associations are reevaluating their involvement with NSBA. The Pennsylvania and Ohio School Board Associations have already voted to withdraw their memberships from NSBA. The message needs to be sent that New Mexico will not support organizations that threaten parents for the simple act of petitioning their government officials.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter. Please don't hesitate to follow up with any questions.


Sincerely,




Paul Gessing
Rio Grande Foundation



Carla Sonntag
New Mexico Business Coalition



Ronnie Lucero
New Mexico
Republican National Hispanic Assembly


Dax Contreras
Hispanos Unidos

Rep. Jim Townsend
House Republican Leader



Rep. Rod Montoya
House Republican Whip



Rep. Rebecca Dow
House Republican Caucus Chair



Senator Gregory A. Baca
District 29
Senate Republican Leader



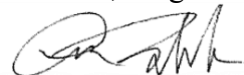
Senator Craig W. Brandt
District 40
Senate Republican Whip



Senator Mark Moores
District 21
Senate Republican Caucus Chair



Rep. Gail Armstrong
HD-49, Magdalena



Rep. Alonzo Baldonado
HD-8, Los Lunas



Rep. Rachel Black
HD-51, Alamogordo



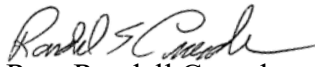
Rep. Cathrynn Brown
HD-55, Carlsbad



Rep. Zach Cook
HD-56, Ruidoso



Rep. Jack Chatfield
HD-67, Mosquero



Rep. Randall Crowder
HD-64, Clovis



Rep. Kelly Fajardo
HD-7, Los Lunas



Rep. Jason Harper
HD-57, Rio Rancho



Rep. Joshua Hernandez
HD-60, Rio Rancho



Rep. Ryan Lane
HD-3, Aztec



Rep. Stefani Lord
HD-22, Sandia Park



Rep. Greg Nibert
HD-59, Roswell



Rep. Randall Pettigrew
HD-61, Hobbs



Rep. Jane Powdrell-Culbert
HD-44, Corrales



Rep. Bill Rehm
HD-31, Albuquerque



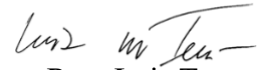
Rep. Larry Scott
HD-62, Hobbs



Rep. Candy Spence Ezzell
HD-58, Roswell



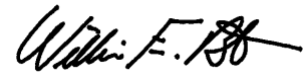
Rep. James Strickler
HD-2, Farmington



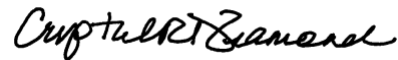
Rep. Luis Terrazas
HD-39, Silver City



Rep. Martin Zamora
HD-63, Clovis



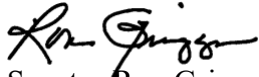
Senator William F. Burt
District 33



Senator Crystal Diamond
District 35



Senator David M. Gallegos
District 41



Senator Ron Griggs
District 34



Senator Stuart Ingle
District 27



Senator Steven P. Neville
District 2



Senator William E. Sharer
District 1



Senator Pat Woods
District 7

School Board Members:

Rusty Henard
Tatum Municipal Schools

Chris Stewart
Tatum Municipal Schools

Daniel Palacios
Tatum Municipal Schools

Travis Glenn
Tatum Municipal Schools

Gary Eidson
Hobbs Municipal Schools

Kenneth Reed
Eunice Municipal Schools

Peggy Muller-Aragon
Albuquerque Public Schools