



THE SENATE
STATE OF MICHIGAN

JIM RUNESTAD
15TH DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 30036
LANSING, MI 48909-7536
PHONE: (517) 373-1758
FAX: (517) 373-0938
senjrune@senate.michigan.gov

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE, CHAIR
APPROPRIATIONS
EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS
FAMILIES, SENIORS, AND VETERANS
JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEES:
JUDICIARY AND PUBLIC SAFETY, VICE CHAIR
CAPITAL OUTLAY

November 22, 2021

Michigan Association of School Boards
1001 Centennial Way, Suite 400
Lansing, MI 48917

Dear Executive Director Wotruba,

We the undersigned members of the Michigan Senate request your prompt attention to the matter regarding the Sept. 29 letter from the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to the Biden Administration.

Like you, we care very deeply about the future of our students, our families, and Michigan's education system. We are especially concerned about the direction of local schooling, as well as the role that parents should be playing in their children's education.

The NSBA's disrespectful and antagonistic actions against parents – including the urging of federal authorities to probe and potentially prosecute parents as “domestic terrorists” – raise serious concerns about the organization, its leadership, and its ability to advocate on behalf of local education in general.

Therefore, we urge the Michigan Association of School Boards to immediately withdraw membership and affiliation with the National School Boards Association.

While the NSBA has recently scrambled to apologize for its offensive letter to the Department of Justice (DOJ), more recent developments reveal NSBA officials coordinated with White House and DOJ officials for weeks to iron out the details of the letter before it was officially published.

The resulting memo that followed this letter directed the DOJ to collaborate with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and other federal, state, and local law enforcement to deploy counterterrorism measures against parents voicing their displeasure with school policies.

The NSBA letter falsely claimed that school boards were “under immediate threat” from attendees and parents at local meetings across the United States. The memo also referred to parents and stakeholders as “extremist hate organizations showing up at school board meetings,” and argued that “the classification of these heinous actions could be the equivalent to a form of domestic terrorism and hate crimes.” We believe that such language and outright intimidation cannot be allowed to represent the views of the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Parents have the right to speak up when it comes to how their children are being educated, and they should forever have the right to make their voices heard. The NSBA’s view of them as “domestic terrorists” is offensive to millions of Michigan families who are properly invested in their children’s lives, and rightly concerned about the direction of their local schools.

Our offices receive the same visits, calls, texts, social media messages, e-mails, and other communications from parents who are justifiably anxious at the thought of losing influence in how their children are learning. Parents should be the primary decision makers regarding their children’s education, and school boards should never dismiss their input. What’s more, school boards should never seek to intimidate parents or attempt to silence them through threats of federal law enforcement investigation.

Several state education associations, including nearby Ohio and Pennsylvania, have already voted to withdraw their membership. Many other states are moving to do the same. We believe that ending MASB’s membership and affiliation with the NSBA is in the best interest of all involved, especially for our most important stakeholders – Michigan students and parents.

We the undersigned stand unequivocally with the students and parents of Michigan and call for the Michigan Association of School Boards to immediately withdraw from the National School Boards Association.

Sincerely,



Sen. Jim Runestad
District 15



Sen. Lana Theis
District 22



Sen. Aric Nesbitt
District 26



Sen. Ruth Johnson
District 14



Sen. Curt VanderWall
District 35



Sen. Kim LaSata
District 21



Sen. Jon Bumstead
District 34



Sen. Rick Outman
District 33