

# OPINION

Monday, December 29, 2008

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In the past, Options Executive Director Cliff Marcussen has sent letters to teachers scaring them from participating in their own union (Alhambra school board members called these letters "shameful").

Since then, parents have gotten involved to make Options a better program. Now Mr. Marcussen is sending letters to parents hoping to also scare them from supporting teachers to win basic rights at work.

Why is Mr. Marcussen so against basic rights for teachers?

Read the article here from the Honorable Judy Chu, Chairperson of the California State Board of Equalization....

## Helping pre-K teachers create magic

By Judy Chu

**T**HAT excited twinkle in a child's eyes is what makes this time of year so magical. A lot of things can bring that twinkle — a nice holiday story, singing songs, making gifts for mommy and daddy. Much of that holiday magic is delivered by a beloved teacher.

When they're 3 years old, most children meet their first teacher. When done right, early education launches kids on a path that will, hopefully, lead them through college.

And yet, due to years of state and federal budget shortfalls, funding for early education is often Grinchfully low, and this year is no different. The state has already cut millions of dollars for early education and child care programs from its most recent budget, and the governor has already proposed cutting \$250 million more due to anticipated additional shortfalls.

### GUEST VIEW

Preschool teachers are some of the lowest paid professionals in education. The annual turnover rate for preschool employees is 17 percent. Parking lot attendants stick with their jobs at a higher rate than that. Many local early education agencies compensate for limited funding by giving their staff other assurances, such as recognition for their experience and guaranteed staffing ratios that allow enough coverage to create classroom magic.

Options, Inc., however, the largest early education provider here in the San Gabriel Valley, with more than 80 sites, has refused for years to offer these basic protections to their teachers. In fact, earlier this month, hundreds of parents at several Options centers organized a one-day boycott to

send the message to Options' management that they want these basic protections for their children's teachers.

Lola Finley, a grandparent of a 4-year-old at an Options center, participated in the boycott. "Our children need stability and consistency at school. They thrive in a stable and secure environment, which is hard to get when their teachers can be taken out of their classrooms at any given time," she said. "Without respect for the teachers, how can they say they respect our children?"

I was part of a delegation of parents and community members who recently visited Options headquarters in West Covina to highlight the parents' action and tell Options management once again that teachers need and deserve the recognition they're seeking.

Options can make spirits bright this season by honoring young children's teachers.

Judy Chu is the chair of the California State Board of Equalization.

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En el pasado, el director de Options, Cliff Marcussen les mando a los maestros cartas para decepcionarlos y presionarlos de parar su apoyo para su propia union (Miembros del distrito escolar de Alhambra describieron estas cartas como "vergonzosas".)

Desde entonces, padres se han unido con los maestros para mejorar el programa de Options. Ahora, el señor Marcussen a mandando cartas a los padres en esperas de decepcionarlos y presionarlos de parar su apoyo para que los maestros ganen derechos basicos en el trabajo.

Porque sera que el señor Marcussen esta tan en contra de derechos basicos para los maestros?

Revise este articulo escrito por Judy Chu, "Chairperson of the CA State Board of Equalization."

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