



The State Chamber of Commerce



September 27, 2013

Ms. Kerrie Dallman
President
Colorado Education Association
1500 Grant Street
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Dallman:

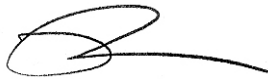
Creating a 21st century educator evaluation system for Colorado empowers and rewards great teaching, fosters accountability and benefits student outcomes. It is a cornerstone of our state's school improvement agenda and, from the business community's perspective, a critical element to fix the state's broken education-to-workforce pipeline. Our landmark educator evaluation law has been hailed around the nation as an example of what bipartisan school reform can look like and potentially achieve. As such, we are deeply disappointed that the Colorado Education Association is considering filing a lawsuit that, if successful, would dismantle the core principles of this law.

Our disappointment stems from a longtime partnership with your organization – cooperation that has been essential to ensure there is a great school option for every child and that a highly qualified teacher leads every classroom. As you know, research shows that an effective teacher and an effective principal are the two most important school-based factors in improving student achievement. We have been pleased by your commitment to this work since the passage of the Great Teachers and Leaders Law, SB 191, in 2010 to both ensure the development and the execution of state rules aligned with the new law and to prepare your teaching corps for statewide implementation. Our agreement and aligned work on this issue have solidified the state's commitment to making schools stronger for our kids.

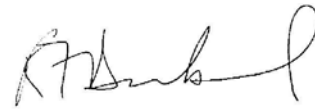
But now, this pending lawsuit puts educator effectiveness at risk, leading you and our partners into unproductive territory that ultimately will greatly challenge our efforts to improve schools. Throwing up legal roadblocks and delaying implementation of this important statute does nothing to improve the effectiveness of our teachers, strengthen teacher and student performance, or expand the horizons of students. The power of Colorado's education agenda lies in the integration of its parts: the intersection of high standards, meaningful assessments, outstanding teachers and high-performing schools and districts, all aimed at helping students succeed in an increasingly competitive workforce. Voters will decide this fall whether to fund these positive changes via Amendment 66; however, your recent actions have put a foundational piece of the reform agenda in jeopardy, and we urge you to drop this ill-conceived and disruptive lawsuit.

As a state, we currently lead the nation in cutting-edge education reform, thanks to Colorado's policy of empowering and rewarding the best educators while ensuring that struggling teachers have the support they need to improve and achieve excellence. It saddens us to know that the CEA would abandon this progressive step forward. We believe that teacher unions must play a role in helping implement educator evaluation and creating a system for public education that most parents and taxpayers work under today in their own jobs. This will ensure that Colorado's education system fully utilizes and develops our schools' most important assets: teachers. We have been pleased to work with you in the past on many education initiatives and are ready to do so again. As a first step, we ask you to waive your legal challenge over the mutual consent provisions of SB 191 and join us in a public statement to reaffirm our shared commitment to implementing the core principles of SB 191 statewide with fidelity. But, if you are not willing to do that, Coloradans deserve to know now, not next year, that you are turning to the courts to undercut positive school reform.

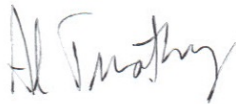
Sincerely,



Pat Hamill
Chair
Colorado Concern



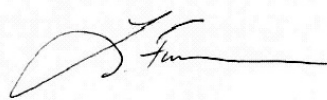
Bob Diebel
Co-Chair
Colorado Succeeds



Al Timothy
Co-Chair
Colorado Succeeds



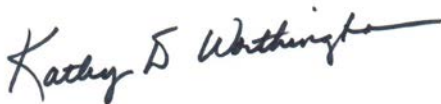
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cc: Tony Salazar