January 9, 2017

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
478 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand:

President-Elect Trump recently nominated Betsy DeVos to serve as his Secretary of Education and lead the United States Department of Education.

As the Senate prepares to conduct Ms. DeVos’s confirmation hearing, the New York State School Boards Association has been preparing as well. In recent weeks we have conducted a survey of our advocacy network, which primarily consists of school board members and other school district officials and staff throughout the state.

In total, more than 400 dedicated education advocates from across New York responded to the survey. We asked them if they supported or opposed Ms. DeVos’s nomination and what questions they would like to see asked during her confirmation hearing. We also asked what qualifications they felt the Secretary of Education should have and whether or not (in their opinion) Ms. DeVos possesses those qualifications.

Overwhelmingly, our members and partners oppose Ms. Devos’s nomination; 86% are opposed. Moreover, the vast majority of our respondents do not feel that she possess the qualifications necessary to hold this position.

The attached report contains a compilation of the survey responses and the questions our members hope to see asked and answered as a part of the confirmation process. We hope you and your colleagues use and share these thoughts and perspectives when evaluating Ms. DeVos’ nomination and, ultimately, deciding whether or not you support her serving in this critical role.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at 518-783-0200.

Sincerely,

Timothy G. Kremer
Executive Director

CC: Senator Lamar Alexander
Senator Patty Murray
NYS Congressional Delegation
Lucy Getman, NSBA
Betsy DeVos Nomination Survey Results

The New York State School Boards Association invited members of our advocacy network – primarily school board members, and active and retired school administrators – to participate in a brief online survey regarding the nomination of Betsy DeVos as the next U.S. Secretary of Education. The survey was made available on January 3, 2017 and remained active until January 8, 2017. Below is a summary of the survey results.

1. Survey respondents were asked: Do you support or oppose Betsy DeVos as U.S. Secretary of Education? Of the 405 respondents, 86% responded that they oppose.

2. Survey respondents were asked what one question they would most want to ask Betsy DeVos. Below are the five most frequently asked questions. The percentage of respondents asking each question is noted in parentheses. n=377

- Given that you have no previous experience serving in a public education setting – as a teacher, administrator or policymaker – why do you think you are qualified for the position of Secretary of Education? (23%)
Given your history as a staunch proponent of school choice measures such as charter schools and vouchers, do you favor, partially or entirely, privatizing public education? (22.5%) 

Do you support the traditional model of public education? (18%) 

Do you support a for-profit model of public education? (7%) 

What will you do to ensure public school districts receive adequate and equitable funding from the federal government? (4%) 

3. Respondents were asked to list what they think are the key qualifications for being the U.S. Secretary of Education and whether they think Betsy DeVos possesses those qualifications. Below is a summary of the top six responses and assessments of Ms. DeVos’s qualifications.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Percent of survey respondents who identified this qualification</th>
<th>Do you believe Betsy DeVos holds this qualification?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a background in public education, such as teaching, administration, school board service, policymaking, etc.</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supports public education</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a degree in education</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a willingness to listen/is open to new ideas</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposes for-profit education enterprises</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A belief that all students deserve equal educational opportunities</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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