



*everychild.one voice.*

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April 18, 2009

Mary Lindquist, President  
Washington Education Association  
PO Box 9100  
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Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

Dear Mary:

When Bill Williams and I met with you, Mike Ragan and John Okamoto last fall, we agreed that the children on whose behalf we both advocate would be best served if our two organizations developed a collaborative working relationship, and at the same time acknowledged that there would inevitably be issues on which we would not agree. As this legislative session has progressed, it has become clear that one point on which our associations did not and do not agree on is the desirability of legislation implementing at least some of the recommendations of the Joint Legislative Task Force on Basic Education Funding.

Until yesterday morning when I opened my email from you with the subject line "I'm outraged", I thought our disagreement on this issue was a difference in priorities, significant but not personal. Thus I was stunned and extremely disappointed by the statement in your email that "The groups behind [HB2261] are vested interests masquerading as concerned citizens who care for children." This was an unwarranted attack on the integrity of this Association and our 150,000 members, many of whom (me, for example) are also members of WEA.

Every day PTA members volunteer countless hours of their time in their local schools, in many instances freeing your members from routine tasks so they can spend more time teaching our students. Every year, PTA members raise millions of dollars so that local schools can purchase classrooms supplies, equipment, and in many instances pay stipends or even salaries for your members. And when levy or bond elections come around, PTA members are there to support

the effort, by making signs, calling voters, standing on the street corner— whatever it takes. Their only “vested interest” is the welfare of their children and the other children in their communities. In fact many of our members no longer have children in school, yet they continue to volunteer because they recognize the importance of public education to our democracy.

A certain level of polemics is to be expected in any advocacy effort. However your *ad hominem* attack on our Association and our members was totally out of line. I resisted responding immediately so that I wouldn't say something in anger that I might later regret. Yet I am just as angry and hurt this morning as I was when I opened my email twenty-four hours ago. More importantly, your statement has inflicted significant damage to the relationship between our associations, damage that I believe will hamper the ability of both organizations to advocate on behalf of the children of Washington state.

Outraged, Mary? You should be ashamed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura M Bay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Bay  
President

cc: Bill Williams