



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

CHRISTOPHER B. COLEMAN  
Mayor

June 15, 2011

The Honorable Elizabeth Kautz  
President, U.S. Conference of Mayors  
City of Burnsville  
100 Civic Center Parkway  
Burnsville, MN 55337

Dear Mayor Kautz:

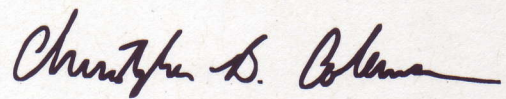
I am honored to have been asked to co-chair the Task Force on Mayors and Public Schools for the U.S. Conference of Mayors along with Mayor Kevin Johnson of Sacramento. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the upcoming annual convention in Baltimore and to participate in the discussion about the reauthorization of ESEA and other important educational issues.

I did, however, want to take this opportunity to share with you my concerns about the two resolutions that will be considered by the Jobs, Education and Workforce standing committee.

I am dismayed and disturbed by Resolution 53 – *Basing Instructional Personnel Decisions on Performance, Not Seniority*, and the related clause on seniority in Resolution 52 – *Reauthorization of the ESEA*. I believe the language in Resolution 53 is inflammatory and misrepresents the research on the impact of teacher lay-offs based on seniority. The issue of teacher quality and retention is far more nuanced and complex than this resolution represents. It demands more sophisticated approaches than calling for a national policy to do away with seniority systems. Where effective teacher evaluation systems exist – as they do in many districts – all teachers benefit and seniority does not stand in the way of teachers leaving when they are no longer effective and good teachers staying.

I know you're as concerned as I am about the language in these resolutions and I thank you for your leadership. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to prevent these resolutions from being adopted.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Christopher B. Coleman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Christopher B. Coleman  
Mayor