

## **Remarks to Board of Education, Community Unit School District 200, June 13, 2007**

My name is Mark Stern and I live in Wheaton.

Board members have said “you get what you pay for.” Is a veteran teacher with 25 years experience and a master’s degree, earning \$90,000 a year, equal to a newly hired teacher paid only \$42,000? Who would parents prefer in the classroom?

Tonight this board will decide whether to take a veteran teacher out of the classroom and pay her over \$90,000<sup>1</sup> a year, plus benefits, not to help children learn, but to conduct teachers’ union business full time on the public payroll. The union acknowledges who benefits by reimbursing the district for a replacement teacher, but only pays the cost of a new hire.<sup>2</sup> We’re paying the rest – over \$50,000 a year – to trade a veteran teacher for a rookie.

We’re told that the district is a “people business.” But District 200 already has an assistant superintendent for human resources at \$145,000 a year, a director of human resources at \$84,000 a year, plus additional staff. The teachers’ contract doesn’t expire for two more years. Why should scarce education dollars subsidize the union president?

The union president happens to chair a political fund that has raised over \$60,000 during her tenure.<sup>3</sup> Some of that money supported the reelection of board members sitting at this table. Voting to spend tax dollars for the union’s benefit is a conflict of interest. Teachers already have a powerful union protecting their rights. This board’s duty is not to ingratiate themselves with the union so it will support their campaigns. It is to protect the interests of the taxpayers, and children who can’t learn from a teacher who doesn’t teach.

Fairness to teachers does not require giving a free ride to union bosses at taxpayer expense. Stop the patronage and use our tax dollars to keep an experienced teacher in the classroom.

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<sup>1</sup> All salary figures are public records from the Illinois State Board of Education, available at [www.thechampion.org](http://www.thechampion.org).

<sup>2</sup> Agreement, Board of Education and Wheaton Warrenville Education Association, 2006-2009, Section 4.6. Even though the Association President makes over \$90,000 a year plus benefits and continuing seniority, union only reimburses the district for the cost (\$42,000 to \$45,000 per District estimate) of the average of newly-hired teachers, who are often entry-level.

<sup>3</sup> Source: Illinois State Board of Elections reports for Wheaton Warrenville PAC for Education, [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov).