April 30, 2013

Arne Duncan Secretary,

Department of Education   
400 Maryland Ave, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Duncan:

The California branch of Democrats for Education Reform (DFER) continues to support the educational leadership of the innovative school districts forming the nucleus of the California Office to Reform Education (CORE) and strongly urge your support and approval of their request for waiver from No Child Left Behind provisions. This proposal builds upon four foundational goals that align to, and extend beyond the three principles of the waiver guidelines:

* College and career ready expectations for all students;
* A focus on collective responsibility, accountability, and action that emphasizes capacity-building over accountability;
* The development of intrinsic motivation for change through differentiated recognition, accountability, and support for schools, and
* Focused capacity-building for effective instruction and leadership

Collectively, the participating districts seeking this waiver serve well more than a million students, are ethnically diverse, and have demonstrated commitments to realizing the education reforms sought by President Obama and yourself. Due to the failure of leadership at the *state* level with respect to implementing needed reforms in the legislative process, these district leaders have come together to continue their fight to ensure educational opportunities for our students. They deserve to be recognized, rewarded, and allowed to carry on with the critical mission of transforming California’s dysfunctional education system “from the ground up”, rather than waiting for Sacramento to finally step up to the plate. We in the California education reform community strongly support them and ask for your support on their waiver request.

An unsigned letter was recently submitted to you posting the logos of eight organizations, including DFER, urging your rejection of the CORE waiver application. However, the DFER

logo reflected the views of individuals in the federal office and did not include nor reflect the views of the state office affected by this waiver request—California--which has long supported the CORE waiver efforts. I submit this letter to you today to clarify this.

As Director of the California Office of Democrats for Education Reform and a former member of the California Legislature, I strongly urge your support for the waiver request. Education is the civil rights issue of our time. This CORE proposal moves us affirmatively towards providing a quality educational opportunity for all.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (323) 441-1930 or at [gloria@dfer.org](mailto:gloria@dfer.org) if you wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,



Sen. Gloria Romero (Ret)

California Director

Democrats for Education Reform

cc: California Office to Reform Education