

Good evening Everyone,

The state of public education is on the precipice of a bottomless chasm while the political winds are blowing at its back. In New York State, Mr. Cuomo is pushing for the opening of the New York State Constitution via a convention that will cost the taxpayers several hundreds of millions of dollars. Money that could be spent on shoring up fiscally strapped school districts such as our own. Instead of removing economically devastating unfunded mandates, the Governor continues to pave new roads for enlarging the reach of charter schools. In Washington, with the appointment of Education Secretary, Mrs. DeVos, the tone has been set for expanding the voucher system and, subsequently, charter schools. These positions only serve to push an elitist agenda: while both public and charter schools must accept children of all levels and abilities, only public schools are required to educate children with linguistic, physical or social disabilities. This is done by removing the mandates from the charter schools and imposing them only on the public schools.

All is not lost. We still have a say: write a note to your Federal Senators expressing your sentiments regarding Mr. Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court. As NYSUT members the [MAC](#) makes this an effortless task. To make your message even stronger reach out to family and friends living in other states. Explain to them that support for Mr. Gorsuch is support for a *right to work* nation. Thereby undercutting the rights of workers across this great country. To understand what this would entail, have them look at what happened to the municipal and state workers of Wisconsin and Michigan *including* the firefighters, policemen, teachers, and other professional state and local employees. The message to be sent is a simple one: "Do not vote in support of Mr. Gorsuch for Supreme Court Justice."

Now is the time for all good men and women to stand together against the tide that seeks to destroy workers' rights. In this era of grandiose talk of wall building, we should not forget the lessons of history: It was not a mortar shell that brought down the Berlin Wall, it was the work of a Polish coalminer who dared to unify his brothers and sisters to fight for the rights of workers everywhere in his country. It was the collective will of the people of East Berlin to brave the gates and walk past the guards that could have shot them in the back but chose to ban together and hold their fire for the common good. As educators we owe it to our families and our forefathers: those immigrants that came to this great land seeking streets paved with gold but quickly realizing that it would be they that were to build the streets. We owe it to our predecessors: those teachers that educated the children of this blessed land. Furthermore, as educators, we owe it to the children before us, regardless of color, creed, and nation of origin, gender, sexual orientation or legal status.

In this instance, the pen is indeed mightier than the sword. Please use your social media contacts and reach out across state lines to urge family and friends to write this simple message to their Federal Senators: "Do not vote in support of Mr. Gorsuch for Supreme Court Justice."

In Solidarity,
Frank



Dear Friend,

Neil Gorsuch, President Trump's nominee for the Supreme Court, testified in front of the Senate, trying to make his case for why he's the right judge for the job. While he was speaking, the Supreme Court released a unanimous decision that Judge Gorsuch was completely wrong on the educational rights of students with disabilities.

Senator Durbin asked Judge Gorsuch about it this morning. Watch the exchange:



[Please click on image to view the YouTube segment](#)

Judge Gorsuch had decided that students with disabilities are entitled to only slightly more than no educational benefit - and nothing more. But as the Supreme Court recognized, Judge Gorsuch's view completely disregards the promises Congress made to disabled students when it passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

It's never been clearer that Gorsuch is wrong for our students and wrong for the Supreme Court.

[Write to your senators today. Demand they vote NO on Gorsuch's nomination.](#)

Alice O'Brien
NEA General Counsel