



CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION

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VIA Electronic Mail

Chief Executive Officers and Senior Leadership: Acero, ASPIRA, Association House of Chicago, Chicago High School for the Arts, Christopher House Elementary School, Civitas Education Partners, Epic Academy, Instituto Del Progreso Latino, Namaste Charter School, Passages, Pilsen Wellness Center, Urban Prep Academies, YCLA

Re: Your support for your statewide lobbying arm engaging in harm to your students and families

Affiliations
American Federation of Teachers, Illinois Federation of Teachers, American Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations, Illinois Federation of Labor – Congress of Industrial Organizations, and Chicago Federation of Labor, Industrial Union Council

Dear Charter Executives:

Our members – the workers in your school who provide instruction, nurture young minds and support the social and emotional development of young people – need your partnership in supporting policies and positions that protect and support our students, who are overwhelmingly Black and brown, coming from neighborhoods that have been starved of resources for years.

Just recently, we've learned from reporting by [Rich Miller in the Sun-Times](#) and from [State Senator Robert Peters](#) that charter operators are funding right-wing politicians and supporting a racist legislative position through funding and formal affiliation with the Illinois Network of Charter Schools (INCS). Specifically, [INCS](#) is bankrolling [campaign literature](#) and identifying itself as in support of Republican State Rep. Chris Bos' distorted and dishonest attacks against the SAFE-T Act, legislation scheduled to be implemented this January that was strongly backed by the Illinois Legislative Black Caucus.

Senator Peters, who has vocally supported the SAFE-T Act, has made his concerns clear to Miller, as well as to the CTU. "It's disappointing to see this from the charter school industry especially since their own website says they serve 92% of students of color," Peters told Miller. "They should support the elimination of cash bail given 87% of their students are on free and reduced price lunch and are profoundly impacted by the issue. I hope they reconsider their position especially for the families their schools serve."

Charter school operators make up the dues-paying members of INCS, which claims to represent you and your schools' interests in the state legislature and throughout Illinois. We believe you must reject and condemn INCS' deplorable stand on this issue, which directly impacts the families of thousands of students in District-run and charter schools in Chicago.

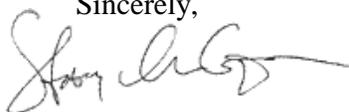
INCS president Andrew Broy regularly speaks at CPS board of education meetings. Broy also heads INCS' political funds, one of which is bankrolling Bos' disinformation campaign with more than \$30,000 for campaign mailers spreading Trump-like rhetoric. These same falsehoods are also being spread by right-wing political operative [Dan Profit](#) and fake news outlets like the [Center Square](#) and [Wirepoints](#), as part of a longstanding campaign of fear mongering backed by some of the state's most reactionary politicians, including [far right gubernatorial candidate Darren Bailey](#).

As the leaders of thirteen charter networks in our city, you have a responsibility to protect the needs and aspirations of our students and their families. Yet by allowing financial support that could go to our classrooms to instead be provided to these kinds of INCS activities – including right-wing candidates like Chris Bos, who also [opposes a woman's right](#) to control her body – you are advocating that [poor people unable to make bail](#) should remain incarcerated at great harm to their families and communities, while the affluent can still buy their way out of jail before trial. Charter school operators like you are opposing the SAFE-T Act's ban on police chokeholds, the Act's demand that all police use body cameras, the Act's addition of rights for pregnant prisoners – including access to their newborn babies – and a host of other reforms that make our criminal justice system less racist and more fair.

Do not allow the needs and aspirations of your students' families to be undermined by supporting rightwing politicians and racist legislative positions that openly harm low-income individuals and families. Whether INCS' aims are to curry favor with rightwing politicians or protect charter operators' business interests, this represents a deplorable misuse of funds and a truly cynical posture on community led efforts to reform a criminal justice system marred by generations of racism and inequity. Instead, we urge you to immediately and publicly declare your support for the SAFE-T act, publicly repudiate the harmful activities of INCS, and call on INCS to refrain from such harmful actions going forward.

INCS' current political agenda also offers a stark reminder of why we are fighting at the bargaining table for contract language about sanctuary, restorative justice practices, LGBTQ+ safe schools, wraparound services and staffing, reducing racial disparities in charter hiring, and contract language that advances equity and justice for our schoolchildren and their families. Please do the right thing. Please inform us and our members of the current status of your schools' support and affiliation with INCS. We urge you to publicly refute this appalling misuse of INCS funds and political capital, declare your support for this ground-breaking legislation, commit to spend funds instead on increasing desperately needed student supports and pledge to oppose any future endeavors that bring such harm to our students and families.

Sincerely,



Stacy Davis Gates
President

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