

Senator Roger Chamberlain
Senate District 38
3225 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55155-1206
Phone: (651) 296-1253
sen.roger.chamberlain@senate.mn



November 4, 2021

Director Kirk Schneidawind
Minnesota School Boards Association

Dear Kirk,

Our representative system of government obligates every school board officeholder to continually receive advice and feedback from constituents whose lives, children, and earnings are often directly impacted by the decisions of these local bodies of governance. As you are aware, this obligation was recently undermined by the intervention of the U.S. Attorney General who broadly characterized recent parental involvement at school board meetings as “harassment, intimidation, and threats” and who promised to use the resources of the FBI and the Department of Justice to “create specialized training and guidance for local school boards” and to otherwise address “this disturbing trend” including “investigation and prosecution.”

This shocking and unprecedented federal intervention is aimed squarely at parents and other local school district residents with the clear intention of bullying and intimidating them into silence. Worse yet, it was urged on and invited by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) – in which the Minnesota School Boards Association holds membership – through a deceitful and defamatory letter to the White House.

I understand the NSBA had not contacted the Minnesota School Board Association (MSBA) requesting input for the original letter and that MSBA urged NSBA to withdraw the letter and to issue an apology.

However, while the NSBA has issued a subsequent message to its members of “regret” and to “apologize” for its letter because of the “process,” there is no specific retraction of the statements and goals of the original letter, and, to our knowledge, the NSBA has not asked the Attorney General to stand-down or otherwise desist from targeting parents and other citizens.

Subsequently, several state associations of school boards from across the nation have acted on their own in opposition to NSBA. According to Parents Defending Education, 23 states have formally distanced themselves from the NSBA letter and five states – Missouri, Ohio,

Louisiana, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire – have ended their association with NSBA. Minnesota is currently listed as “no response.”

I request that Minnesota School Boards Association leave no doubt that such an approach as originally proposed by the NSBA (and as currently being carried out by the federal government) is not reflective or representative of how our school boards intend to interact with their constituents and that Minnesota membership in NSBA is being ended pending any serious reform and leadership change at NSBA. Further, I ask MSBA for assurances that it will not facilitate federal intervention or participate in federal involvement affecting school board meetings in our state.

Sincerely,



Senator Roger Chamberlain
Senate District 38



Senator Justin Eichorn
Senate District 5



Senator Scott Newman
Senate District 18



Senator Julia Coleman
Senate District 47



Representative Sondra Erickson
House District 15A



Senator Gene Dornink
Senate District 27



Representative Ron Kresha
House District 9B