



TSTA NEWS

TEXAS STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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**May 17, 2012
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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House candidate promoting effort to repeal educational standards

El Paso educators today challenged District 75 legislative candidate Hector Enriquez to explain why he apparently is promoting a special interest lawsuit that could devastate public schools in El Paso County.

“Mr. Enriquez is either unaware of the damage this lawsuit could inflict on our schools, or he is joining forces with those who would destroy our public education system,” said Glenda Hawthorne, president of the Socorro Education Association.

Enriquez recently re-tweeted news that the Texas Association of Business (TAB) has joined a lawsuit filed by charter and private school advocates, which attempts to strike down education standards and safeguards crucial to maintaining a strong learning environment for students. Enriquez, a candidate for the Texas House District 75 seat in the May 29 Democratic primary, has been endorsed by TAB.

TAB joined the so-called “efficiency” lawsuit, which claims Chapter 21 of the Education Code is unconstitutional. The net effect of striking Chapter 21 would be repealing the 22-to-1 class size cap for elementary students, removing all training and certification requirements for teachers, eliminating critical class-preparation periods for teachers and jeopardizing teacher retirement benefits.

Several school districts – including Socorro, Ysleta and Clint – in El Paso County have joined a separate school finance lawsuit, organized by the Equity Center, which is attempting to force real improvements in the public schools. That suit, which more than 400 Texas districts have joined, asks the court to require the Legislature to enact a more equitable, adequately funded school finance system.

“I can’t imagine why an El Paso candidate would align himself with private charter operators who seek to eliminate public education standards instead of supporting the legal effort being waged by our local school districts,” said Arlinda Valencia, president of the Ysleta Teachers Association. “El Paso needs better state support for our local schools, and we won’t get that from people seeking to enrich themselves by cramming students into overcrowded classrooms with untrained, unqualified ‘teachers.’”

The Socorro Education Association and the Ysleta Teachers Association are local affiliates of the Texas State Teachers Association, which has endorsed Mary González for the Texas House District 75 seat in the Democratic primary.

“El Paso needs a state representative, like Mary González, who will stand up for our local schools, not someone who doesn’t understand the importance of maintaining important educational standards,” Hawthorne said.



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15. Texas Education Code, Chapter 21 makes the system inefficient and therefore unconstitutional. Personnel decisions are seldom designed in the best interests of students. Current laws make it difficult to hire and efficiently compensate the most effective teachers and remove poor performing teachers. Districts are burdened with arbitrary and inefficient rules and regulations in dealing with personnel. Chapter 21 in its entirety drives millions of dollars in waste every year. A few specific examples include:

The above language is from the lawsuit joined by the Texas Association of Business. Repealing Chapter 21 of the Education Code, which the suit claims is unconstitutional, would result in the following educational standards being lost:

1. There would be no regulation of class size for any grade.
2. Teacher standards would be lowered because certification requirements would become irrelevant. This would allow for the hiring of teachers who have no training or educational preparation.
3. Planning times for teachers would not be guaranteed.
4. Duty free lunches for teachers would not be guaranteed.
5. The minimum salary schedule for teachers would no longer apply. Years of service for the best teachers would be meaningless.
6. Across the board pay raises would not apply.
7. Teachers would no longer have contracts. All school employees could be hired and fired at will.
8. Due process rights for educators would not apply, and teachers could be fired at will.
9. No oversight by Texas Education Agency, due to budget cuts to the agency.
10. As students leave school districts, the districts would lose money.
11. Defined benefit plan under Teachers Retirement System would be lost.