



October 30, 2014

An open letter to teachers and public employees:

Campaign season is in full bloom and with it the panoply of confusion and half-truths.

Rob Astorino has run a campaign of deception and cheap tricks. He recently sent a letter to teachers claiming to be a friend of the teachers. And today, he's claiming to be a friend of public employees. Rob Astorino should be enemy number one for teachers and public employees. Just ask any teacher or public employee in Westchester what he did to teachers and public employees there. He is a stalwart and proud anti-union executive.

Rob Astorino brought Scott Walker to New York for an Astorino fundraiser and said Walker has set the model that New York should follow. He believes the public unions are the heart of the state's problems. So he wants to roll back public employees and teachers' rights.

Rob Astorino may say he is for public education, but he would like to see charter schools replace public schools and is a rabid "privatization" advocate. He is no moderate Republican but rather the harshest brand of ultraconservative New York has seen. He also wants to repeal the Triborough Amendment that provides protections to public employees, supports work rule changes, supports reducing pension benefits and turning all pensions into 401(k) defined contribution plans, supports school vouchers, opposed teacher tenure and opposes the Dream Act.

Governor Cuomo has said public education will be a top priority and showed his commitment last year when he raised the education budget to the highest level in history. He funded teacher incentives and training. He has said repeatedly charter schools cannot replace the need for a top flight public education system. He constantly stresses the need to treat teachers as the professionals they are. The Governor wants to reduce the bureaucracy that frustrates us all—teachers, parents and students alike. It was Governor Cuomo who advocated and signed the Common Core moratorium bill. As far as "respect" is concerned, the Governor's mother was a public school teacher and his daughter attends public school.

Actions speak louder than words. Don't be fooled.

David A. Paterson

State Chair
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