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DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE RESPONSE TO NJ UNION
BOSS COMMENTS THAT “LIFE IS NOT FAIR”

The comments made by New Jersey Education Association Executive Director Vincent Giordano on the "New Jersey Capitol Report" this past weekend were callous, pure and simple. These comments, which are summed up in his conclusion that “life is not fair,” are emblematic of many teachers unions’ entrenched position to resist change and thus thwart school choice, an option which would definitively level the playing field for all children especially Latino and Black children who are suffering by the severe underperformance of failing schools.

Public schools are failing their children in droves. Poor children are disproportionately affected by this failure, because they have no school choice. These children and their families have virtually no options to escape the tremendously negative impact on performance that comes from attending failing schools. If they attend a failing school, they often lack the financial resources to change their situation by attending a private school, and are generally prohibited from switching to a higher performing school in another district due to zoning laws.

School choice, particularly a voucher system, allows parents the option to leave a failing school, removing the “life sentence” that has been laid upon children by virtue of them being poor. Mr. Giordano’s outrageous comments are the height of hypocrisy, because his excessive union leader salary affords him the ability to keep his children out of failing schools and instead send them elsewhere. Furthermore, this argument wouldn’t even be happening if public schools were providing adequate, high performing education. But the fact of the matter is, they are not.

I, on behalf of the Diversity Leadership Institute, join New Jersey Governor Chris Christie in his calls for Giordano to resign after his callous remarks reflected this man’s—and that of the teachers union which he represents—disconnect with school choice and chances at genuine reform that would benefit our nation’s most precious endowment: children.