
THE LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

“The impact of educational funding reform on the Newark school system”

LOCATION: Bethany Baptist Church
Newark, New Jersey

DATE: August 14, 1996
6:00 p.m.

MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE PRESENT:

Senator Wynona M. Lipman, Chairwoman
Senator Ronald L. Rice
Senator John H. Ewing
Senator Gordon A. MacInnes
Assemblyman Joseph Charles Jr.
Assemblywoman Nia H. Gill
Assemblyman LeRoy J. Jones Jr.
Assemblyman Craig A. Stanley
Assemblyman Willie B. Brown



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APPENDIX:

Statement submitted by
Denise Mullens Carter, Esq.

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mjz: 1-89 (Internet edition 1997)

SENATOR WYNONA M. LIPMAN (Chairwoman): Please sit down as soon as you can. Pretty soon there will be chairs for you, if there aren't any now. But we must get started, because there are a number of people here who want to speak, and we would like to get everybody in tonight.

Before we begin, we are going to be blessed by Reverend Yeonne Best, who is the Associate Pastor of this church, the Bethany Baptist Church.
(applause)

REVEREND YEONNE Y. BEST: Good evening.

MEMBERS OF AUDIENCE: Good evening.

REVEREND BEST: On behalf of our Pastor, the Reverend Dr. James Arthur Scott, we welcome all of you here tonight. Bethany is a caring church. We care not only about our community and our congregation, but about each and every one of you here tonight.

So let us begin with the words of a prayer. Almighty and eternal God, the God of all truth, the God of all life: We thank you, Lord, for this day, and we thank you for this gathering this evening. We ask your blessings, oh Lord, upon this hearing. We pray, oh God, that everything will be done in decency and in order. We pray, oh God, that there will be fruitfulness from the deliberations from the hearing and from the issues that will be discussed that will affect the lives of our children and all of the families of our community.

We pray, Lord, that all hidden agendas, selfish ambitions, or manipulative intentions will come under the light of your truth, and that righteousness and equality and justice will be the motivators behind everything

that is said and done. With all of our knowledge, give us wisdom, compassion, and love this evening, in the name of our Lord we pray. Amen.

MEMBERS OF AUDIENCE: Amen. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Thank you all for coming. We are very grateful that you are here -- so many of you -- and we look forward to hearing from you.

We are here this evening to take testimony on the Whitman administration's school funding Plan. This is the latest version of several proposals since school funding dedications began over 20 years ago. It seems especially appropriate that we are here in this church to take testimony from our concerned parents, educators, and community leaders, because it is no secret, and it comes as no surprise that it is New Jersey's urban students from communities like ours who are not receiving a thorough and efficient education, as guaranteed by the Constitution. (applause)

Beginning in 1970, with the filing of *Robinson v. Cahill* by Jersey City on behalf of a student by the name of Kenneth Robinson, the school funding law has been the focus of Court ruling and legislative deliberation. In response to *Robinson v. Cahill*, where the Court determined that students were not receiving a thorough and efficient education because of the wide disparity in pupil expenditures, the Legislature passed the Public Education Act of 1975, Chapter 212, which increased the State share of education costs from 28 percent to 40 percent.

During the first several years, Chapter 212 did close, somewhat, the spending gap between rich and poor districts, but disparities soon began to grow. In February 1981, Marilyn Morehouser of the Education Law Center

filed a complaint in New Jersey Superior Court on behalf of 20 urban children, arguing that the disparities in educational expenditures and programs that had developed between wealthy suburban districts and poor urban districts had again grown to unconstitutional proportions.

On June 5, 1990, the New Jersey Supreme Court rendered its decision which determined that the existing school funding law, Chapter 212 of 1975, was unconstitutional as applied to poor urban districts. The legislative and executive response was the passage of the Quality Education Act in July of 1990, and the subsequent modification, QEA II, passed in March of 1991. Together, these laws resulted in an increase of State aid to public school districts of over \$800 million for the 1991-1992 school year.

Yet, five years later, here we are again, searching for a way to satisfy the constitutional mandate to provide to every New Jersey student -- regardless of any accident of birth -- the opportunity to receive a thorough and efficient education, the foundation of a successful future.

We have with us tonight: Senator Jack Ewing -- Senator Ewing, please raise your hand so we know who you are -- Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, representing Morris and Somerset Counties; Senator Gordon MacInnes, a member of the Senate Education Committee, who also represents Morris County; Senator Ronald Rice, Newark Councilman and Senator from Essex County, the 28th District.

SENATOR RICE: That's right.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Assemblyman Leroy Jones, a member -- no, you're not a member of the Education Committee.

ASSEMBLYMAN JONES: No.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Assemblyman Jones is the Minority Leader in the Assembly. He represents District 27.

Assemblywoman Nia Gill, from the 27th District, from Essex County -- that's right, the 27th District, Nia Gill. She is on the Education Task Force.

Now, to point out exactly the members of the Education Committee, I am going to start with my partner here, Craig Stanley. He is a member of the Assembly Education Committee. Senator Ewing, Senator MacInnes -- and Nia Gill is a member of a subcommittee?

MR. JACKSON (Aide to Senator Lipman): The Education Task Force.

SENATOR LIPMAN: The Education Task Force. All right.

Now, before we begin these proceedings, I am going to have Assemblyman Craig Stanley, who helped me to put this together, say a few words.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you, Senator Lipman.

I just have a few brief remarks. First of all, I want to thank everyone for coming out. It is a good showing for a subject that definitely deserves our attention. I also want to thank Senator Lipman for taking the initiative to bring about a hearing here in Newark. (applause)

There have been three Senate and Assembly Education Committee joint hearings on the Governor's proposed Plan. One was held up in Parsippany, one was held in Trenton, and another one was held in Voorhees on July 25. We were all very concerned that there had not been a hearing here in Newark, the largest district in the State of New Jersey, a district where

Abbott v. Burke originated. We just felt that we deserved to have a hearing here in Newark, and I am glad that Senator Ewing felt it important enough to come out, and Senator Gordon MacInnes came out. I am also glad that you came out. And again, I am also glad that Senator Lipman had the vision to bring this hearing to Newark, because it deserved to be in Newark. She should not have had to do it. They should have had a joint hearing scheduled here. But she called me-- (remainder of sentence indiscernible due to applause)

We studied old pieces of legislation and, again, have reached some conclusions. One of the conclusions is that neither of the bills before us today satisfy the Supreme Court's mandate, *Abbott I, II, or III*. Second, neither bill really addresses the current situation in public schools. The Supreme Court ordered the Legislature to eliminate all spending disparity between the wealthiest and poorest districts; to provide necessary supplemental programs to help poverty districts; and to provide necessary programs to help to reduce the impact of poverty.

In the wealthier districts, right now, as we read the bill, taxpayers can agree, can vote to have extensive increases in public spending. Therefore, the disparities will continue under the legislation we have before us today. With respect to at-risk programs, those programs which are supposed to reduce the effects of poverty, which were also court ordered-- Although the administration's Plan has some -- goes in some direction toward providing at-risk programs, it does not go far enough, nor do the numbers substantially come close to the numbers that are recommended in *Abbott v. Burke*.

So we have a long, hard row to hoe. We have a hard task before us, but I am encouraged by the number of people here tonight. We are very eager to hear the testimony.

With that, Senator Lipman, thank you.

SENATOR LIPMAN: All right.

We are going to get started now. I have to say that presently we are limited to five minutes or less -- five minutes or less. When we get down to the end, other people may have to reduce it to three minutes. But for now it is five minutes or less.

I am going to call the first speaker, who will be Councilwoman Crump, Mildred Crump, Newark City Council. Is she in the room?

C O U N C I L W O M A N M I L D R E D C R U M P: I'm here.
(applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Councilwoman Crump, will you please welcome the people to the hearing tonight?

COUNCILWOMAN CRUMP: Thank you, Senator. I shall be obedient.

First of all, let me thank the Senator for once again being the iron butterfly. You all may not know what this means, but when there is a tough job to be done, you can look for Senator Wynona Lipman to do it. As Assemblyman Craig Stanley mentioned, it should not have had to come just from her efforts and from her vision. It should have come from those persons who are in great power and authority.

We welcome you to the City of Newark. We are delighted that we have an opportunity to present to those persons who were courageous enough

to show up tonight to hear our concerns and to allow us to raise our questions. I would also like to welcome you to my church. This is where I am every Sunday at 8:00, so I feel real comfortable.

To the point: The issue of school funding is absolutely, inextricably tied to the subsequent layoffs that have occurred in Newark and to the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996. People have said to me that they are two separate issues, and I say they are not. We should not entertain any discussion without making certain that those persons who are representatives here understand that in Newark, we see them as one issue. (applause)

The Act allows and permits arbitrary decisions regarding school funding, as well as what happens within our district. It is inconceivable to me that anyone would advocate for any legislation that would downsize a district in suburbia in order to keep this district in check and powerless. The parameters of T&E are unjust and unacceptable to us here in Newark.

I also ask you not to play with the numbers. You know, there is something called syllogism, and we can take numbers and make them say whatever we so wish. So I ask you not to take the numbers and justify your actions, Senator. We did not work so hard on *Abbott v. Burke* to go backwards, and that is what we are doing right now. We are going backwards. (applause)

The funding formula for incentives needs to be revisited and reevaluated. Do we have a timer? (no response) We need to also revisit and reevaluate the supplementary stabilization aid. The document that has been presented is very lengthy and has an awful lot of legalese that may not be understood by everybody. So I am going to be asking, the Essex County

delegation in particular, if we can prepare a *Cliffs Notes*' version of this particular Act. Is that possible, Senator? People are calling my office. Can we get a *Cliffs Notes*' version-- I'm sorry. Senator Rice, can we get a *Cliffs Notes*' version of the Act?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: We have that. We will try to get some here, if we don't have them here already.

COUNCILWOMAN CRUMP: Will you try to get some to us? I am sure that everybody sitting behind me would like to have one of those.

For those of you who do not know, for more years than I was ever an elected official, I was a teacher, and I have not lost that hunger for children to succeed and to be given the best opportunity to succeed. I am prepared to support you when it is crystal clear that your first concern is the children, and not control. Right now, it is control and not children. (applause)

So I request that you return to Trenton armed with the knowledge that there are those who are looking to you to save our children. I shall close with a statistic that I quote quite often: "Our children represent 35 percent of the intelligence in our world. Our children represent 25 percent of the population in our world. Our children represent 15 percent of the buying power in our world. But our children represent 100 percent of our future," and I don't want to leave them one that is failing. That is not going to prepare them for the next century.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: The next speaker will be Rebecca Doggett, Special Assistant to the Superintendent of the Newark School District. (negative responses from audience)

All right, quiet. Quiet. (Senator Lipman pauses here until audience quiets down)

REBECCA DOGGETT: Thank you, Senator Lipman.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Can we have quiet, please?

MS. DOGGETT: Thank you, Senator Lipman, for making it possible for residents of the City of Newark to meet in the City of Newark to discuss the issue of funding for our public schools. It has been a long time, Senator, since I have sat before you to testify about funding, but here we are again.

Over the past years, we have often had to talk about funding formulas which tend to favor some parts of the State and disadvantage other parts of the State. We also appreciate the effort that you and your colleagues in the Essex County delegation are making in Trenton to protect school funding. We also appreciate the time and attention that the school funding issue is receiving by Senator Gordon MacInnes and Senator John Ewing.

I am speaking this evening as a representative of Dr. Beverly Hall, our State District Superintendent of the Newark Public Schools, and also on behalf of the children in the Newark public schools. (negative responses from audience)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Quiet, now. Let her finish.

MS. DOGGETT: Senator, as you know, I suspect that those remarks are orchestrated. I am sure there are people in the audience who would like to hear what the State District Superintendent has to say. (witness interrupted by audience)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Please, we really need to give everyone an opportunity to speak. This is a hearing, and we need to give everyone an opportunity to speak.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: If they would only tell the truth. Why are they telling us new lies?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Please, please!

MS. DOGGETT: Let me start by giving you an accounting of what has been happening this year with our current level of State aid funding. The Newark public schools received \$385.5 million in State aid for 1995-1996. On July 1, 1996, the State aid level of funding was \$382.4 million in State aid -- for the current budget year we are in. The reduction of \$3 million this current year was due to a penalty that was imposed by the State Department of Education because of excessive administrative fees in the Newark district.

Let me also review what the new district leadership has been able to do to start the Newark public schools on the road to recovery. As an experienced and highly successful educator, Dr. Hall stated very early upon her arrival in the district, that she will need-- (interrupted by members of audience)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Quiet, quiet, now. Let her finish.

MS. DOGGETT: --that she believes that the Newark schools could be turned around to make students successful learners. She also stated that she could rebuild the curriculum with the budget that is currently available to us. However, more funding would be needed for classroom technology and for new construction and major renovations, but the current funding level

would be sufficient to do what was needed for basic curriculum reform here in Newark.

Let me review the steps we have taken to use what we have in a more effective manner. We have upgraded the security and condition of all of our school buildings-- (interrupted by members of audience)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Let me just say this: If we can't let her finish what she wants to say, then it is going to delay us getting to other people who want to testify. So you need to be quiet and you need to let her finish her testimony so we can hear everybody else.

SENATOR LIPMAN: You are not going to get to hear all the people if you keep acting up.

Thank you, thank you very much.

MS. DOGGETT: We have also embarked on an ambitious program to enhance student achievement in the coming year by eliminating the gross inefficiencies of the past. We will be able to take resources from central administration and noninstructional programs and reallocate them to support comprehensive programs and services for children.

The management and teaching staff will be supported in these program initiatives by a decentralized administration directly accountable to the schools. The Central Office reorganization and efficiency measures are expected to yield over \$26 million that can be reallocated to school-based programs. The funds we have freed from Central Office budget and school budgets are being redeployed for the following purposes. I think the parents in the audience would like to hear this:

*For full-day kindergarten we are going to spend \$2.1 million.

*For guidance services, to put guidance counselors and social workers in the Newark schools for the first time-- (interrupted by members of audience)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Excuse me. Can we at least let Ms. Doggett wrap up her testimony? Excuse me. Hello. Can we just let Ms. Doggett wrap up her testimony?

Thank you.

MS. DOGGETT: Guidance services, \$3.5 million.

*More security in the schools, \$2 million.

*Alternative programs, \$1.1 million.

*Innovative programs, \$10 million.

*Local initiative programs, \$3.2 million.

*To assist those folks who have been laid off, \$4.3 million.

The shifting of \$26 million from noninstructional areas will bring critically needed programs into our schools. We recognize that this reorganization has caused great personal distress to over 600 families, and the district has taken many steps to help to alleviate this pain for those employees who were laid off.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Ms. Doggett, in an effort to try to get to the issue we are dealing with here this evening, may I just ask you a question regarding the effects this funding formula will have on your school system.

In your opinion-- (Interrupted by members of audience) Excuse me. This is a public hearing. If we can't hear, it is not a hearing.

Ms. Doggett, I would just like to ask you a question: Does the current school funding formula -- does it do Newark justice in terms of *Abbott v. Burke*, and does it help or hurt the Newark school system, in your opinion?

MS. DOGGETT: The current formula or the proposed formula?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: The proposed formula.

MS. DOGGETT: If the *Abbott v. Burke* case were to succeed, Newark would only gain about \$3 million, because, ironically Newark is close to parity. Not as some of the other urban districts are, Newark is close to parity. However, the new funding formula, obviously, by cutting \$30 million, would set us back.

One of the things that I brought tonight was our strategic plan, which would take our children to the year 2000. By the year 2000, if we can carry out this plan with the money we have--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Okay. Let me ask you another question: Can we carry out this plan under the proposed funding formula?

MS. DOGGETT: This plan could not be completed by the year 2000 with the \$30 million cut and a possible cut from the City of Newark.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you.

MS. DOGGETT: This plan could not be done by the year 2000.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Ms. Doggett. I appreciate your taking the time to come in.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Too many people were laid off and that is why they are upset. Too many people were laid off.

MS. DOGGETT: I understand perfectly.

SENATOR LIPMAN: All right, please be quiet. (remainder of Senator Lipman's comment indiscernible due to amount of noise from audience)

Larry Leverett, Superintendent, Plainfield School District.

LARRY LEVERETT, Ed.D.: Good evening. My name is Larry Leverett. I am Superintendent of Schools in Plainfield, New Jersey, a lifelong resident of this State, and I have spent my entire career in the public schools of New Jersey.

Thank you, Senator Lipman and other representatives from the Legislature, for the opportunity to testify on this matter of importance -- enormous importance -- to our community.

We have done a good job in New Jersey in some respects, and I applaud the Commissioner and the Legislature for their efforts in setting standards. Math standards, science standards, workforce readiness standards, technology standards -- fine. Unfortunately, setting standards alone is an inadequate response to the educational needs of the children across this State.

The Legislature and this entire New Jersey community has the responsibility to ensure that every child, regardless of race, class, gender, or geographic location has access to the necessary opportunities to learn. Unfortunately, the bills pending before the Legislature and the Commissioner's Comprehensive Plan fail to do this. The struggle is at the center of our dilemma. How can we, one New Jersey, design one funding system that ensures that every child in our State is guaranteed the opportunity to be educated in a learning environment that will increase the probability of their success.

Your challenge and our challenge is to develop a response that upgrades curriculum instruction that affords ongoing and sustained professional development that engages parents and communities as partners in the educational process that provides safe, secure, drug-free, and learning environments and adequate facilities for learning. Schools and districts across this State, particularly our urban districts, need technical assistance that supports the kinds of intensive effort required to upgrade teaching in all classrooms. These efforts must be bolstered by rethinking teacher education, teacher certification, and our system of assessing student learning.

Unfortunately, A-20, S-40, the Governor's proposal, and the Commissioner's Comprehensive Plan fail to come up to answer these issues in a way that will provide equal opportunity for every child in this State.

I am Superintendent of the Plainfield public schools. We are a district located in Central New Jersey. We have about 7000 children, and 53.2 of those kids are eligible for a free or reduced price lunch. Nearly 14 percent of our residents are unemployed. Over the past two years, our ratables have been reduced 27.1 percent. Yet, this Plan calls for Plainfield, one of the poorest districts in the State, to suffer the largest dollar loss of all districts in Union County. That is reprehensible and beyond my ability to comprehend.
(applause)

As Superintendent of Plainfield, I represent my community. I do not come here as a professional bureaucrat, a hired gun. I am the voice of Plainfield-- (interrupted by audience) Now, we are doing in Plainfield what you want us to do. We have extensively involved our community. Jack Ewing was there on September 20 when we kicked off a community planning

process. We successfully reached out to business and industry. We have a multiyear strategic partnership with the world's largest telecommunications corporation, AT&T. We are linked up with higher education, with Rutgers and Kean, and we are reaching out to Howard University and their Center for the education of students placed at risk in our society. We are partners with our union. We are not in an adversarial work relationship. We are working together.

The Plainfield Board of Education approved and proposed a \$34 million referendum to equip all of our classes with technology, to provide full-day kindergarten in every school, to provide middle schools of choice, to upgrade every library media center, and to replace an aging school facility with a community education model. We have expediently increased staff development across our district, participated in statewide and national initiatives, and we, too, as Newark has, have adopted a multiyear strategic plan which comes from our community and which is approved by our Board.

We are committed. We want higher performance in our district. We are not doing all that we need to do, but we are committed to doing whatever it takes to ensure that our children are educated and competitive with all children. We plan to make Plainfield work. But I am telling you, you implement S-40, you implement A-20, you implement the Commissioner's Comprehensive Plan, and you place a dagger through the heart of our efforts to improve educational opportunity for some of New Jersey's poorest children.

I plead with you for the children of Plainfield. Listen to me. Don't hurt my children that way. Please ma'am, please sir. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Our next speaker will be Reverend Reginald Jackson, President, Black Ministers' Council. Reverend Jackson.

REVEREND REGINALD JACKSON: Let me begin by thanking Senator Lipman for sponsoring tonight's hearing. Let me also first express a concern which the Ministers' Council has had. We are very concerned that the Joint Committee did not schedule a public hearing in one of the urban 30 school districts. The primary reason by which the State Supreme Court required the State to come up with funding in the first place, was because of the disparity between spending in urban school districts and in suburban school districts. So it is puzzling to us why the Joint Committee would not schedule a public hearing in one of those urban districts. (applause)

The Black Ministers' Council of New Jersey has major concerns with this legislation, both in terms of its substance and its motive. We believe that our children, whether they be black, white, brown, yellow, urban, suburban, or rural are our most valuable resource and should be our number one priority. Whatever the General Assembly and the Governor finally approve, it should be sufficient to guarantee every one of these children a thorough and efficient education, regardless of where they live or attend school.

Let me address first the issue of substance. This bill, S-40, would require many districts to decrease the quality or the level of education currently provided to the students. So-called "lighthouse" districts, as well as others around the State, under this legislation, would be accused or would be guilty of excessive spending and would have to cut back not only spending, but courses and programs. Not only would the students in these districts lose

valuable and necessary courses and programs, but urban districts would lose out even more. Where currently many of these districts do not have courses or programs that these other districts provide, they would, in the future, because of the financial constraints, have to cut back themselves. They would still not receive the quality education that other students receive.

Indeed, the sad result of this legislation would be that rather than our children gaining, all of our students would be losers. Students from wealthy districts would lose, because programs already in place would be lost. Urban students would lose, because they would not be able to enhance their educational programs. This legislation is not designed to provide a thorough education, but a minimum education that would jeopardize the future of all of our children.

Let me say a word about motive. The Black Ministers' Council is also concerned about what we perceive to be the motive behind this legislation. We state again that this is our perception, but we believe that this perception is accurate. Our perception is that the overriding consideration in this legislation is not educational, but it is political. (applause) The design for this Comprehensive Plan was not to provide a thorough and efficient education for every child in the public school system in the State of New Jersey, but it was specifically designed not to bust or break down a budget which is already being balanced on the pension fund, the unemployment fund, and the disability fund.

The Ministers' Council is very troubled by the scenario by which the funding mechanism is being put into place. We have no qualm with the quality, curriculum, and program in the lighthouse districts. But we do have

a concern when their quality and their program are diminished in order not to bring up urban school districts to the same quality program. We do not believe that funding should decrease in order to balance a budget, but we do believe that funding should be increased to provide a thorough and efficient education. (applause)

Every night this week at the Republican Convention in San Diego, I heard and saw efforts to persuade the nation that the GOP is inclusive and the party of opportunity. I do not make this partisan, but Republicans control the Assembly and the Governor's Office. We saw General Colin Powell, whom we respect and whom we honor, held out as an example of that inclusion and diversity. But let's be realistic. General Powell, in his book *My American Journey*, said that he began to turn his life around by going into the ROTC or the Army. Well, understand, all urban young people cannot go into the Army. Therefore, it is imperative that they receive the best education possible. This legislation does not assure them the best. It assures them the minimum.

We agree with the Governor, money is not everything. If that were the case, Newark, which spends alone more than the State average, would not now be under State control. But, while it is not the only thing, let us also acknowledge that nothing else will function without it. Newark, East Orange, Irvington, Plainfield, and other urban districts do not need a reduction in costs, but they need the anticipated increases based on current levels.

Finally, as I close, let me add that it is imperative that we deal with this idea of community. It is imperative that the Governor and the Assembly understand that schools do make up the fabric of the community. Last night I heard something, and when I heard it, it struck me about this Comprehensive

Plan, which, in fact, it appears that many are missing. I heard it said -- and I am not going to look at the convention tonight, because it got me upset last night-- (laughter) I heard Senator Kay Bailey Hutchinson say something which I think is an indictment not on the Republican party, but on the American educational system and perhaps why we are falling behind the rest of the world.

She said that we do not need a village to raise our children, but we need families. Well, Sister Hutchinson needs to read that African proverb to get a better understanding. Whether they be rural, urban, or suburban, families cannot raise children by themselves. It does take a village, and schools are part of that village.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Since I spoke to you last, we have been joined by Assemblyman Joe Charles, of Hudson County. Assemblyman Charles, would you please stand up or raise your hand? (applause) And this is Mims Hacket, who is the Mayor of the City of Orange. (applause) On my right, your left, is Assemblyman Willie Brown, from the 29th District. (applause)

The next speaker will be Ms. Kim Gaddy.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Senator, with all due respect, can you lay off of the-- (remainder of comment indiscernible; no microphone)

SENATOR LIPMAN: All kidding aside, this hearing is about Senate Bill No. 40 and Assembly Bill No. 20. There is a connection, and

perhaps we will get to it with some of the speakers tonight. Some people have signed up.

Is Kim Gaddy here? (no response)

MARY ELLEN KILGALLON: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Mary Ellen Kilgallon. I am here as a representative of United the Children's Hospital and I am here to speak for children this evening.

Whether we are talking about health care or we are talking about education, we are talking about the future--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Excuse me. We announced Kim Gaddy. Kim Gaddy is next on the speakers' list. (confers with Senator Lipman)

Larry Hamm. I'm sorry.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Sorry about that.

MS. KILGALLON: I'll be back.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Is Larry Hamm here?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Yes, Larry Hamm is here.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Mr. Larry Hamm, Peoples Organization for Progress and the Million Man March.

LAWRENCE HAMM: Good evening. My name is Lawrence Hamm. I am here to represent the Peoples Organization for Progress. I am also State Chairman of the New Jersey Million Man March Coalition. I have a prepared statement which I will submit. However, the way I feel right now, I think I am going to put the prepared statement aside and talk about the way I really feel.

First of all, I want to thank Senator Lipman and my old friend, Craig Stanley, for calling this hearing. I would like to thank all the elected officials who are here tonight to hear what we have to say. It is about time that the people of Newark are heard, because we have not been heard up until now. (applause) We have heard from the powers that be. They have all the media at their disposal. But the people, we only have each other.

Twenty-five years ago, I was seventeen years old. I was appointed to the Newark Board of Education. I was the youngest school board member in the history of the country, at that time. I was appointed because, at that time, I was part of a student movement that was fighting to improve the quality of education in the city, in urban areas throughout the State, in 1971. Twenty-five years ago, black, Hispanic, and poor children in this city received an inferior education. We marched in the streets against that, but, unfortunately, twenty-five years later, they are still receiving an inferior education. (applause)

Twenty-five years ago, 1970, 1969, the school system in Newark was run by a predominantly white Board of Education. It had a white Superintendent. We felt we had to build a movement for self determination to empower black people to have control over the institutions that were in our communities. But twenty-five years later, even though we have black people on the governing board and black people in high positions within the school system, we still feel we are under white domination and white control. (applause)

I don't want to make this a racial issue, because, actually, the issue is deeper than that, although it involves the issue of race. This is August. Why

is August significant? August is significant because in August 1619, the first slaves were brought to Jamestown, Virginia, and that began the slave trade. That was the beginning of the subordinate status of African-Americans in this country. We always knew from the beginning of our struggle that we needed education to help us to get out of the oppressive state we were in. We risked our lives just to learn how to read. We might lose a hand, a foot, or maybe even our life if we were caught with a book. We wanted to read and write, because we knew that would be a tool for liberation.

One hundred years later, after slavery, and after segregation, there were, in essence, two school systems in America. We had in America-- We talk about South Africa, but we had apartheid right here in the United States of America. And this was acknowledged. It was acknowledged by the Supreme Court in the *Brown v. Topeka, Kansas Board of Education* decision, which said that racially separate and unequal schools were illegal under the Constitution. That was a benchmark ruling for us, because it acknowledged the fact that we had inferior schools in our communities, and that this situation needed to be corrected.

In 1970, after we struggled through the Black Power Movement to elect the first black mayor, who then appointed the first black Board of Education -- and I was appointed a year later in 1971 as the youngest School Board member -- the State Supreme Court gave us the *Robinson v. Cahill* decision, which said that even after *Brown v. Topeka*, that the unequal situation had not yet been corrected, and that our children needed a thorough and efficient education.

Racial segregation: This situation needed to be corrected. After the end of legal apartheid in America, thorough and efficient-- We needed that, but it wasn't enough simply to say that it was wrong to have separate and unequal schools, we needed the resources to, in fact, make that happen. That is why the *Abbott v. Burke* decision is as significant, even more significant, than *Brown v. Topeka*, because it would give us the resources that we need to correct an unequal and unjust situation.

So we took a small step forward with *Abbott* that said, "We have, in New Jersey still, after slavery, after the Civil Rights Movement, after the Black Power Movement -- we still have an apartheid school system in this State, and under the Constitution of this State, the State government is legally bound to correct that situation." It took a small step forward to do so, but now has taken 10 steps back back. They want to go back to the situation that existed prior to that. (applause)

Our Organization -- the Peoples Organization for Progress -- unequivocally opposes S-40 and A-20 because under those bills our school systems will lose millions and millions of dollars. There will be more layoffs. That 600 was just the beginning. There will be more layoffs. But you know, it always amazes me how I can pick up the newspaper and find that we can raise millions to build prisons, but we can't raise millions to adequately fund our public schools. (applause)

We have to see *Abbott v. Burke*. We have to see the current situation for what it is. This isn't an isolated situation here in New Jersey. This current school funding Plan, these layoffs, this State takeover, everything that has occurred is part and parcel of the movement to take back all of the

gains that we have made over the past 30 years. In this State, we celebrate the birthday of Martin Luther King. Every January, we pay lip service to his dream, but if these bills are passed, we will trash the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King.

So we are asking all of you who are in front of us to be our advocates, our champions, to do everything you can. Stand up, like we stood up in Washington on the 16th of October -- stand up and speak out for us. If you give the word, we will come in numbers like have never been seen before. We know what the Legislature is going to do, but the question tonight is: What are we in this room going to do? I wrote letters, I protested, I marched, I went to jail with children in South Africa. If I can do that for children in South Africa, I am willing to do it for our children here in the State of New Jersey. (applause)

My time is up, but I say to all of you who are here tonight: We must put aside our petty differences. All that has divided us and kept us apart in the past must now melt away so that we can take a stand for our children. Our children's lives are at stake. I'll tell you tonight how deeply I feel about this. Sometimes we have to do big things; sometimes we have to do small things. Sometimes we have to do both. But in addition to everything else that we have said we will do and must do, beginning the 1st of September, I am going to go on a fast to save our children. I will fast until this bill is voted on. I ask anyone who feels as strongly as I feel to join me -- to join me in this fast and join me in all the actions that we must take to save our children, to save our city. We are not going to sit idly by while our children are uneducated,

while our people lose their jobs, while our city is falling apart. We are going to act. So I ask you to join with me, because together we can win this struggle.

Thank you very much. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Our next speaker will be Mr. David Sciarra, Education Law Center.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: While Davis is coming forward, we have a couple of people we would like to acknowledge. In the rear, Ms. Maria Vizcarrondo DeSota, the President of the United Way is here. Give her a hand. (applause) Chris Morris (indiscernible), Executive Director of Newark Day Care is here. Give her a hand. (applause) And George Grizzley, President of Local No. 617 is here. Give him a big hand. (applause)

DAVID G. SCIARRA, ESQ.: Thank you, Senator Lipman and members of the Assembly and Senate. I come here tonight as the attorney for the school children in *Abbott v. Burke* and as the person who is responsible to carry on the legacy that Marilyn Morheuser left us. I have already given our technical comments on this bill to all of you up at the table, and I am not going to go through that again.

I want to make a few simple points about this Plan tonight, though, and how we have to try to understand it. The first and most important point we all need to recognize about this Plan is that we have a Governor who has reduced the income tax 30 percent and has scaled back every other State tax that there is. There are less State dollars today to support public education than there were when this Governor took office.

The second most important thing about this funding Plan is that it is designed and intended to make sure that we maintain those tax cuts. It

is an attempt to fund public education and meet the *Abbott* decree without spending any more State money. At all costs, the Governor and the proponents of this Plan want to avoid having to reinstate any of the State tax cuts that have been made over the last three years. Let's be clear about that. None of this Plan makes any sense, unless we understand these points:

We could have an equitable funding formula for all districts, urban and suburban, if only the Governor would be willing to restore some of, not even all of, the State dollars we have lost. Let's also be clear: We will not have an equitable funding formula without more State money. When we accept this political reality, and it is all just politics, we can then understand this formula. It is a simple formula, really. *Abbott* requires equity and comparability with suburban schools. Urban schools must have the same level of programs and funding as suburban schools. The urban districts are spending \$7200 per pupil. The suburbs spend \$8200 per pupil. To raise urban schools up under *Abbott* requires \$1000 more per student in the urban schools, or \$30 million for the 30 urban districts. This means more State money. Remember, according to the Governor, we can't raise taxes.

So what do you do? Three things: First, you throw out the suburbs as the standard for a thorough and efficient education -- that is what this Plan does -- and you say that those suburban districts are wasting money. The second thing you do is adopt a phony, cooked-up amount and pretend that it is all that all schools need to provide a thorough and efficient education. The third thing you do is, you make sure that that amount, that phony amount, that cooked-up amount, is just where the urban schools are now, \$7200 per pupil, so that we don't have to spend any more money on urban

education, and, God forbid, we have to spend any more money on poor school children.

What are the results? It is devastating for urban schools. Take Newark: Almost at the suburban level, \$8100 per pupil. Newark has to be brought down to \$7200. That is why we have these cuts in State aid. What does Newark lose? Newark loses big time: \$30 million in State aid for regular education; \$12 million in local revenue; \$10 million in special education funding; and \$22 million for extra programs for poor children in the district. It is simply absurd for the State to take over Newark and reduce the funding to a level that everyone agrees makes it impossible for improvements.

The results are devastating for public schools everywhere in the State. Let's make no mistake about it -- the suburbs, the cities, the towns, the rural districts, all of them. This Plan forces leveling down of quality education in the suburban districts, and makes certain that urban schools such as Newark will never improve. It is designed to erode public support for public education. Perhaps the supporters of privatization and vouchers, like the Governor, will get what they want in the end. (applause)

Make no mistake about this Plan. This Plan is worse than anything else we have seen over the last 25 years, and every law that the Supreme Court has declared unconstitutional in *Robinson v. Cahill* and *Abbott v. Burke*. We must do everything we can to make sure that this Plan does not become law. Rest assured that the Education Law Center will do all that we must to defeat this Plan in court if it ever becomes law.

Let me close by reciting something that Marilyn used to say at times like this. She used to cite something from that freedom fighter,

Frederick Douglass, every time she was in these situations. I want to briefly mention what Frederick said. He said, "Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want to plow crops -- who want crops without plowing up the land." Frederick said, "Power conceives nothing without a demand. It never will. It never did. And the limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those who may oppress."

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Unfortunately, Nia Gill has to leave. There is another hearing tonight in West Orange. That is quite a distance from here and that is why she is leaving.

The next speaker will be Andaiye Foluke, Pro-Child Coalition -- PCC -- and a teacher in the Newark school system.

ANDAIYE FOLUKE: First of all, let me say good evening. Let me thank Senator Lipman for spearheading this public hearing--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: May we have quiet, please? May we have quiet?

MS. FOLUKE: --and express my appreciation to those of you on the panel for extending yourselves to hear our concerns over the proposed school funding formula.

As previously stated, my name is Andaiye Foluke. I am the mother of a daughter attending school here in Newark, and I teach adolescents in the Irvington Public School District. At present, I am affiliated with seven educational groups. Included in my written testimony -- and I have a copy for each of you -- are the names of those groups, one of which is the Pro-Child Coalition, on whose behalf I have been asked to appear before you tonight.

Over the last six months, I have had the opportunity to attend many of the hearings on this matter, and I am convinced that of all of the concerns presented before the Joint Education Committee thus far, the only concern is the concern over hindering the educational pretensions of the wealthy, predominantly white students. This has been more important than maximizing the pretensions of the disadvantaged, predominantly black and Hispanic students. Reporter Don McCloggen (phonetic spelling), in his special July 1996 education report states: “There is some sentiment in the Legislature to tell the courts to get lost, to stall, to merely go through the motions of debating school funding, or to make only cosmetic changes in a system that suits the dominant white suburban interests just fine. So important was this concern that key members of the Assembly introduced an alternative bill, A-20, which would ensure the continual existence of current educational programs in the wealthy districts. However, the authors of this bill did not see fit to protect the current programs in the urban districts, nor did they see it as important to ensure that the funding necessary, which was mandated by the court to help special ed districts combat the societal problems often caused by the State itself, was available.”

One only has to ask: Who will have to deal with the 1000 more Newark families affected by the State’s mandate to reduce the personnel in the Newark Board of Education? Who will have to deal with larger class sizes as a result of the reduction of teachers in the Irvington public schools? Who has to deal with the problems inherent in the increasing number of single-parent households, which the legislators themselves have to assume some responsibility for?

In the 1960s, Aid for Families with Dependent Children was introduced as part of the war on poverty. However, it created a significant role in the vicious cycle that our urban communities are in. Why? Because it required men to be out of the home. The law of the government broke up the family, and thus the cycle of fatherless homes began. At the July 25, 1996 joint public hearing, Assemblyman John Rocco, who was presiding over the hearing, indicated, on several occasions, that his main consideration was to maintain the status quo and prevent the unrest that occurred after the signing of the QEA. As coauthor of the A-20 bill, it is apparent that he does not see the urban population, or, more specifically, the blacks and Hispanics, as part of the status quo, nor does he consider our concerns to be problematic.

Since the introduction of the first black in the 1600s into the Jamestown colony, the question of education for us in the United States has always invited controversy. Throughout our history here in America, African-Americans have placed the highest value on education, and have been told repeatedly that what is good for the goose, is not good for the gander. Even in 1996, it is clear that race still shapes the opportunities and life chances of our children. The educational opportunities that are being offered to our children today are similar to the educational opportunities of African-Americans during the days of Jim Crow and *Plessy v. Ferguson*, separate and unequal.

Once again, we are being forced to struggle against advocates of an educational system that undermines all that we believe education stands for; that is, to uplift, not to keep down, to change things for the better, not to maintain the status quo, to educate for empowerment, not subordination.

On behalf of the Pro-Child Coalition, I have not come before this panel of legislators begging for fairness and quality in the education of our children. We had our day in court, and the courts ruled on our behalf. I have come to warn you that there is still a great fund of enthusiasm for education in our communities. It is the fruits of a heritage of struggle. It is the legacy, sometimes written in blood, of the many thousands gone. We are personally offended by the S-40 and the A-20 bills, which are racist, discriminatory, and perpetuate the vicious cycles within our communities. Like our sister, Rosa Parks, and the civil unrest that occurred 30 years ago, we say, "No more. Enough is enough." If you say cut back, we will say fight back. (interrupted by members of audience)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Our next speaker will be Mr. David Weiner, President of the Essex and Passaic CWA.

DAVID WEINER: Good evening. I am David Weiner, President of Local No. 1081 of the Communications Workers of America, representing 800 nonmanagerial employees in the Essex County Division of Welfare and 400 in the Passaic County Division of Welfare.

I thank Senator Lipman for arranging this forum, as well as the distinguished legislators for attending.

My brief statement may appear to digress from the topic but, in fact, it does not. Senate Bill No. 40 reflects the lack of respect for urban inhabitants, their children, and the loyal, hard-working school system employees who serve these children. The recent layoffs and privatization of the Newark public school employees is an attack upon all low- and middle-compensated public employees. (applause) It is an attack upon progressive

unions, the last bastion of organized opposition to governmental excess and abuses. It is attack upon the progress made by minorities within a color-blind Civil Service system, a system under attack by this Governor in an effort to emasculate it, or perhaps eliminate it. Finally, it is also an attack upon women. It is an attack upon the very fabric of our society, particularly the urban corps of our State and our county.

We have to look at the entire picture. We have to look at the weakening of affirmative action, the undoing of fairly reapportioned congressional districts to provide greater representation. The privatization of public employees' jobs and the so-called welfare reform will all help to destroy this society and ferment a sociological Armageddon.

Senator Ewing, with all due respect, sponsored Senate Bill No. 1380, which would have privatized the Essex County Division of Welfare, but we were fortunate. With the help of Senator Lipman, Senator Rice, Senator Codey, and others -- and the Assemblymen here, to stop it. It was done ostensibly to save money. The fact is, the cost per case to administer welfare in Essex County is \$200. The cost in Somerset County, where the respectful Senator comes from, is \$700. This is fact. I suggest you check this out.

This privatization of the Newark system and our system will pit the working poor against the rejected welfare mothers and fathers. They will be fighting like dogs for low-income service jobs, jobs which will not support a family with health benefits or pensions.

I was born, raised, and I live in this city, and I love this city. I stayed here to dedicate the past 20 years of my life as a social worker. I am appalled by the incessive assault upon the cities, minorities, and public

employees, in particular. That much touted Performing Arts Center downtown, which the State helped to pay for, will stand as a worthless multimillion dollar boondoggle, sitting idly by as the suburbanites will fear to frequent a former renaissance city that will once again be rife with strife and turmoil. These people behind me are mad. They deserve to be made. (applause) While I may lack the verbal acuity of Brother Hamm, and while I may look different than someone who should be saying these words, they have to be said anyway.

Propriety and false civility must be cast aside in the name of social justice. We at Local No. 1081 of the Communications Workers of America are here to stand with our sisters and brothers who labor in Newark, and we will do all we can to help stop the destruction of their jobs and the destruction of the school system.

I will close with these remarks: To paraphrase Baldwin, the fire next time is not going to be on Prince Street in Newark. The fire next time will be in Livingston, will be in Somerset, and will be in Trenton.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Dr. Edward Verner? Is Dr. Verner here?
(no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Michelle Munsat, a teacher in the Newark school system.

MICHELLE MUNSAT: Good evening. My name is Michelle Munsat, and I am a parent with two daughters in the Newark school system, two daughters aged 15 and 11. I am also a member of the Pro-Child Coalition. This Coalition is comprised of members of the Newark community who are

concerned and wanting to fight back concerning education. We are parents, we are teachers, we are students, we are cafeteria workers, we are security guards, we are school nurses, and we are in coalition to fight back against the attack that is coming from the State of New Jersey against our children. We will also fight back against the attack that is coming from the State-appointed Board of Education and their attack against our children. (applause),

My words tonight will be short and they will be clear. I am not here to argue, to convince you that the City of Newark needs more money to educate our children. You all know that our level of funding is inadequate. You know that the State of New Jersey and the Federal government no longer have any interest in educating working-class children, especially the children of urban communities.

I want to make it clear what we all know. The Governor of the State of New Jersey and the Legislature of this State are acting in violation of the law. You have been for 20 years. The governors of this State, whether Democratic or Republican, for 20 years and more, and the Legislature of this State, whether Democratic or Republican, for more than 20 years, have been in violation of the law. More than 20 years ago, the New Jersey Supreme Court told the Legislature that the funding scheme was illegal. And do you know what? It still is. (applause)

The Governor of this State and the State Legislature should not have had to sit around and wait for the Supreme Court to tell them that the funding was illegal. You should have known it all along. And do you know what? You did know it, and you continued the funding even still. One thing has become very clear to me: The State of New Jersey has never wanted to

educate the children of the City of Newark, because if it had wanted to, it would have done so by now. What is clear is that the State of New Jersey and the Federal government have no interest in educating our children. Why? Because you don't have any jobs for our children. The only interest that the State of New Jersey and the government has for our children is jails. I have never heard a legislator complain that we are spending too much money on building jails. I have never heard the Governor of this State complain that we are spending too much money on jails. I have never heard the President of the United States complain that we are spending too much money on jails.

It is clear to every single person in this room that the current funding formula, whether it is Plan A or Plan B, is a sham and a lie. The Governor tries to tell us that all she has to do is spend the same amount of money for a child in Summit as she does for a child in Newark and they get the same education. That is a sham, and it is a lie.

I will close with these thoughts: We may live in Newark, but in spite of the governors and the Legislatures racist and antiworking-class views, we are not stupid. We know what the Governor and the Legislature are doing. You are refusing, once again, to obey the law.

Now, I have heard many times in my life that a system that can't provide jobs for each and every one of its citizens who want to work maybe does not deserve to exist. I will expand on that: Maybe a system that doesn't want to educate each and every one of its children does not deserve to exist.
(applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Mr. Ben Amos, Newark School Board member.

BEN AMOS: Senator Lipman, I will correct that for the record. It is the Advisory Board.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Of the Newark Advisory Board.

MR. AMOS: Good evening, Chairman Lipman, good evening, Chairman Stanley, and members of the Senate and Assembly who are here tonight to hear our concerns.

I am an appointed member of the Newark Advisory Board of the Newark public schools. My appointing authority is the State Commissioner of Education. I am here to speak against the proposed \$42 million cut that would drastically impact, in a negative way, on the quantity and quality of education in our district. I am amazed and perplexed at the possibility of such a huge revenue loss in a district that was just seized by the State a little more than a year ago.

At that time, when I and many Newark residents made a conscious decision to sit on the Advisory Board, we were assured that there was going to be an ironclad partnership between the State, the community, and the parents to educate our children. The verbal contract was marketed throughout the city, bringing on stakeholders from the very diverse aspects of the community. We were assured by the State that they had a plan to educate our children, and that when changes were to occur, they would be done the honorable way, with compassion and fairness.

However, the actions of the State these past 45 days have devastated this community, consistent with a storm of hurricane force. Many innocent parents were harshly removed from the working class. They were just pawns of this process. We must remember, the past problems of this district

had more to do, firstly, with questionable leadership at the top levels of management; and, secondly, the social environment that too many of our children are forced to live in. It is not the overpaid cafeteria workers and other bottom feeders on the organizational chart of the school system who are responsible for Newark's past failure to educate its kids.

Having said that, I must declare that the State is breaching its contract with this community and restate who the real enemies of the educational system are. Those are: poverty, hopelessness, and despair.

In closing, I urge this all powerful Committee to protect the State-operated school districts from further abuse by circling your wagons in the State Legislature and denying those persons in the Governor's Office the satisfaction of implementing a funding Plan that would have cataclysmic effects on our children and communities into the foreseeable future.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Would all the speakers please try to limit their testimony from now on? We are one hour behind because of the applause, the shouting, and so forth. So we are going to ask you to limit your speeches.

Is there a pretty girl here named Ruby Foluke? If she would come forward-- I understand she has to go home and go to bed.

Leroy Jones is leaving now. He has to go to his own district of West Orange to another hearing on this same topic.

Is Ruby Foluke here?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Yes, she is coming up.

RUBY FOLUKE: Good evening. My name is Ruby Foluke. I am a sophomore at University High School, a magnet school here in Newark, New Jersey.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: Louder. You have to speak up.

MS. FOLUKE: There is a silent dialogue going on about the future of my education. I and all of those individuals that love me the most have been left out of the dialogue about how to best educate me. So I thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of myself and other Newark students.

First, I would like to share with you a few facts about myself, and then I will move on to my personal concerns with the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996, introduced as both Senate Bill No. 40 and Assembly Bill No. 20.

After second grade, I was skipped to the fourth grade because I attained a high test score on the Stamford Achievement Test. At the end of fourth grade, I ranked second in my class. At my sixth grade promotional ceremony, I received 22 awards and trophies, four of which were for having the highest test scores on the California Achievement Test. At my eighth grade crossover, I ranked number sixth in my class with a GPA of 3.5, and received the top award for math and science.

In 1995, I was named the United States National Award Winner in Mathematics. As a ninth grader, I took the SSATs and did better than 61 percent of New Jersey college-bound seniors in verbal reasoning and better than 70 percent of New Jersey college-bound seniors in math.

This summer I was chosen to participate in the W.E.B. du Bois Scholar Institute, a five-week leadership program at William Paterson College. Coupled with all of my academic accomplishments, I am a member of the Pep Squad and the Tennis Team, and a privileged member of the University High School Stage Band.

These personal facts are shared with you because I am certain that I am not the type of Newark student that you envision. However, contrary to what many will tell you, I am not an exception. In fact, one only has to remember that there are three magnet schools, along with high achievers, in each of the other Newark high schools. But what distinguishes us from other fellow students? The Governor and Commissioner Klagholz would say that money is not the issue. However, they are wrong. Most of us high-achieving students here in Newark have parents who support us, who can afford to make sacrifices to enroll us in enrichment courses not offered in our public schools, but are part of the curriculum in the wealthier suburban districts.

Moreover, since many Newark students are in danger of computer illiteracy, our parents have provided us with our own personal computers. Just recently, my own parents committed themselves to a monthly tuition so that I can attend a Saturday school which will home in on mathematics and science skills. Thus you can see that a true thorough and efficient education does cost money, contrary to what the Governor and the Commissioner state. Moreover, as all of us know, the Supreme Court of New Jersey, in its ruling in *Abbott v. Burke*, clearly instructed the State, and not the parents to appropriate funds for a true thorough and efficient education.

Here is where my perplexities with Senate Bill No. 40 and Assembly Bill No. 20 begin. Beginning in fourth grade, most New Jersey students begin to learn about the three branches of U.S. government and how they function. It was my understanding that although the legislative body has the power to make laws, it is the judicial body that has the final say on whether these laws are constitutional. How, then, can legislators publicly defy the highest court in the State without being arrested?

Another perplexity that I have with S-40 and A-20 is that neither bill makes any attempt to outline what programs need to be in place to guarantee that the students in the poorer districts will be able to compete with the students in the wealthier districts in college or in the workplace.

A third perplexity I have with S-40 and A-20 is the wording that attempts to lay the blame of inefficient use of spending on the special needs districts. Isn't Commissioner Klagholz directly responsible for all State-run schools? Isn't he, by State law, required to keep a watchful eye over, and even give his approval on the spending habits of most school districts?

In closing, I have never had to experience the pain of racism and discrimination that I experienced when I read the synopsis of these two bills. Both bills shout out to me that students in the poorer districts are not worth the effort or the money. In order for me to afford a true thorough and efficient education, it will be necessary for me to leave my family and community. This is certainly not a choice that a student in Madison, Highland Park, Livingston, or any other wealthy district would have to make.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Our next speaker will be John Dzwonar of Special Audiences.

J O H N D Z W O N A R: Good evening, Senator Lipman and the remaining members of the panel.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: We can't hear you.

MR. DZWONAR: My name is John Dzwonar, and for the past 16 years I have been Founder and Administrative Director of Special Audiences, a community-based organization in Newark. Special Audiences serves the economically disadvantaged and physically and mentally challenged of all ages. I am here tonight on behalf of our most important clients, the children and adolescents of Newark.

It has been my experience that in a poor city such as Newark, handicapped by poverty, it takes more money to educate a child, not less. Comparisons with the suburbs are kind of difficult.

I began working with young people in Newark in 1976. In 1989, Special Audiences started Teen-to-Teen, an HIV and substance-abuse prevention project that uses theater as an educational tool. In the past seven years, the adolescents who make up Teen-to-Teen have brought their potentially life-saving message to over 50,000 of their peers. When Special Audiences started Teen-to-Teen, I was not prepared for the sorry state of education of young people in Newark.

Although the average age of Teen-to-Teen members is 16, the average reading level is 5th grade, and the average math level is just slightly higher. These youth are so poorly prepared to become citizens in our society

that Special Audiences was forced to develop a complete tutoring program for our youth. The result is that in Newark, a city where only 40 percent of high school freshmen will graduate, Teen-to-Teen can proudly point to our 91 percent graduation rate and the 85 percent who continue on to college.

But what of the youth who are not lucky enough to receive mentoring, tutoring, remediation, socialization skills, and all the other ingredients to prepare them to take care of themselves? They can no longer look to support from the welfare state, it is being dismantled as we speak. If they have literacy problems, there will be no special programs to help them. We are watching the entire safety net for our most vulnerable members being totally unraveled.

At the same time, our Governor impresses the nation with her message of cutting taxes. We know this is accomplished on the backs of poor, minority, urban youth. Do we really want to see S-40 pass, with Newark losing anywhere from \$31 million to \$52 million?

I am not here to support the current administration of the Newark Board of Education. I am very unimpressed with the current administration. I am here on behalf of the children and adolescents who have few people willing to speak on their behalf. As we learn by reading Isaiah, Chapter 11, "And the little child shall lead them."

Tonight, I ask you: Will that child be semiliterate, lacking basic cognitive and mathematical skills, unable to fulfill a job more complex than flipping burgers, unable to comprehend, no less obtain, birth control, lacking in the basic skills needed for any level of participation in our great democracy?

This is your decision.

I want to turn the remainder of my time over to a student of the Newark system who has tried to work diligently for the poor people, on her behalf. I think it is better that you hear it from her.

Thank you.

SHAKIRA BOBBITT: Good evening. My name is00

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Excuse me. May we have quiet, please?

MS. BOBBITT: My name is Shakira Bobbitt. I will be a senior at University High School in Newark in September. I am also one of the privileged members of the Teen-to-Teen. I have been lucky so far to have been educated and guided by John and all the people at Special Audiences. But there are tens of thousands of youth who are not so lucky.

If the Newark school system can fail so many students now, how can we expect them to provide a better education with less money? The key to the successful future of Newark youth is not in cutting costs. It is in watching the money management of our adults.

I am proud to be an example of the good that can come out of Special Audiences. I am just sorry that so many of my peers have to be an example of the bad that can come from the Newark schools. Our educational system is crumbling around us. Please help us to get out of the way.
(applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Mr. Dean Sabune, Chairman, Education Committee, Newark North Jersey Committee of Black Churchmen? Is he still here? (no response)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: I don't see him.

SENATOR LIPMAN: You don't see him? All right.

Ms. Denise Carter, Counsel to the Black Issues Convention?

D E N I S E M U L L E N S C A R T E R, E S Q .: Good evening to Senator Lipman and members of the distinguished legislative panel, parents, and fellow concerned citizens. My name is Denise Mullens Carter, and I am Corporation Counsel to the New Jersey Black Issues Convention.

The New Jersey Black Issues Convention is commonly referred to as an organization of organizations consisting of 41 African-American civil rights, labor, business, professional, foreign affairs, senior citizen, and many other organizations. A list of the organizations is provided for you at the end of my comments.

Our testimony tonight comes in the form of a challenge not only to vote against S-40 and A-20, but to go into your respective caucuses and draft legislation -- new legislation -- which will provide parity to urban children.

In the area of public education, New Jersey Black Issues Convention and its member organizations support the slogan, "Education is a civil rights issue." In furtherance of this belief, we have testified numerous times, and recently we filed our fourth amicus curiae brief in the pending *Abbott v. Burke* case, *Abbott IV*. While we proudly defend the civil rights of children in the State of New Jersey to a thorough and efficient education, we are beginning to feel, about our participation, much like relatives who greet one another at a funeral: "It's good to see you, but we are saddened by the circumstances."

The circumstances are worse than saddening, they are disgusting. It is odious that in 26 years since the filing of *Robinson v. Cahill*, the State of

New Jersey has resisted providing parity in education to urban school children, most of whom are black and Latino. Twenty-six years means more than two generations have been lost. No other group of people has been permitted to tolerate such gross injustice for such an excessive period of time as the children of the urban poor. Senate Bill No. 40 and its progeny take us even further from parity in education which was mandated by our State Supreme Court and is required by the thorough and efficient clause of our State Constitution.

Because I have provided you with copies of my comments, I will shorten my vocal comments this evening. However, we want to go on record as being opposed to S-40 and A-20. The appropriate definition for thorough and efficient was handed down by the court. The key phrase is “substantial equivalent of that afforded to the richer districts.” This is the law. Anything else is unconstitutional and illegal.

As you are aware, the Governor and the Legislature have been charged with developing a new funding mechanism and, again, we challenge you to vote against what has been brought to us which is illegal and draft new legislation which will, in fact, provide parity, because, at this point, as you understand, the courts are not going to be the place where the decision is made. It will be made in the Legislature, so we are looking to you, our advocates.

Almost 100 years ago, the United States Supreme Court permitted the doctrine of “separate but equal” to reign through American jurisprudence through its decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*. The educational formula in S-40 and A-20 is linked to issues of school takeover, school voucher, privatization

through the prevailing philosophy of removing resources from public schools. It is important that you continue these resources in the public schools.

The racial implications of S-40 are overwhelming. According to the 1990 census, as you all know -- those of you who are left here -- over 700,000 New Jersey's African-American citizens resided in urban areas. New Jersey was recently cited as the fourth most segregated school system in the country. In 100 years, from *Plessy* to *Robinson* to *Abbott*, we have returned to the fundamental truth--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Excuse me. May we please have quiet? It is hard for us to hear the testimony, and it is very important.

Thank you.

MS. CARTER: --which was originally ignored. Separate is not equal. It never will be, unless the members of this Legislature vote against this unconstitutional and immoral legislation and act to draft and introduce legislation which will guarantee a thorough and efficient education to all the children of this State, inclusive of the urban poor, we will lose more than another generation.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Mr. Wilbur Haddock, New Jersey Coalition for True, Thorough, and Efficient Education, and Director of the Urban Parents Education Institute.

W I L B U R H A D D O C K: Good evening. Senator Lipman, distinguished members of the dais, parents, students, and friends. My name is Wilbur Haddock, Director of the Urban Parents Education Institute, based

here in Newark, and a member of the newly formed New Jersey Coalition for True, Thorough, and Efficient Education.

First, as others have done, I want to thank you all for agreeing to be part of this, what I have to call, the second people's public hearing on school funding. We welcome your presence. We call it "the people's hearing" because, as was stated before, for whatever reason, hearings are not held in Newark or Orange. There was one held in Irvington, and at that meeting people asked for a hearing in Newark. Senator Lipman, once again, came forth and said that she would call one. I thank you again, Senator Lipman, for following through.

For some reason, it seems that whenever there is an important issue that affects urban parents, students, and citizens, the public hearings are never held in cities like Newark, Jersey City, Plainfield, or Paterson. We have to travel to towns like Parsippany or Voorhees, so finally we get to be heard. Folks say, "Newark is in the house."

Second, it is important that you be here in Newark to hear the sincere concerns, frustrations, outrage, and anger from us, as well as our suggestions and our ideas on what we want and what should be done to provide our children, and all children, with a thorough and efficient education in the State of New Jersey.

After almost 30 years of struggle, two New Jersey Supreme Court decisions, millions of dollars in legal fees, we, the parents, students, and citizens of Newark, and the other 30 special needs districts, are still not being heard. The two State Supreme Court decisions -- *Robinson v. Cahill* and *Abbott v. Burke* -- continue to fall on deaf ears.

When Mrs. Robinson went to court, all she wanted, as any mother would, was for the State of New Jersey to live up to its constitutional obligation and provide a thorough and efficient education to her daughter, and as Mrs. Brown, of *Brown v. Board of Education*, in Topeka, Kansas, wanted for her daughter. The United States Supreme Court finally heard the Brown family's plea. The New Jersey State Supreme Court heard the Robinson family plea, but the State Legislature did not, even though the Public Education Act of 1975 -- or the T&E law -- was enacted. It did not legally address the Supreme Court's mandate and failed, creating more problems than it solved. So back to court. In 1990, *Abbott v. Burke I, II, and III* were instituted, and again it is not working.

Did anyone listen to the plaintiff in *Abbott v. Burke* or to the New Jersey Supreme Court's powerful ruling? It appears not, if the solution we are given in 1996 is the Governor's Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996. Is this Act about our children's education or budgets and tax cuts? This Act is not what *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 promised, or what *Robinson v. Cahill* in 1975 or *Abbott v. Burke* in 1990 was supposed to deliver. This Act we cannot and will not accept as it stands. We have lost too much to accept so little. The price we have paid is so high and so our children have suffered, our families have suffered, our communities have suffered.

We were told when the State took over our Newark school system that the State was doing this for our children. How can you take \$30 million away from the children and say that you care about our children? How can you mandate into law that in 1997 our children who master computer science,

language, math, etc.-- How can you take away dollars that would help the State Superintendent of Schools, teachers, parents, and principals make it happen? How can you build new schools, laboratories for science, and purchase new computers and software so that all children who need one will have one? How can you create smaller class sizes and how can you help the student, though he was behind in reading and math when you got here -- when the State took over, and come up with your standards? How can you say that you want real parental involvement with no money to educate and train the parents to empower them to become equal partners in their children's schools and have decision makers in their districts?

How can all this be accomplished while you are taking away \$30 million from their future? Is there some magic wand, some yellow brick road that we should look for? Will the Brooklyn Bridge be next?

What we need is legislation that meets the New Jersey Supreme Court's mandate. We need legislation that identifies and helps to fund at-risk programs, but not at the expense of others. We need more help, not less financial assistance for special education programs and classified students. We need you to increase the per-pupil expenditure amounts to a level that will provide equal education opportunities.

The Coalition for True, Thorough, and Efficient Education was formed to educate, mobilize, and organize within the 30 special needs districts, and beyond, our position to this Plan. We intend to make sure that our voices are heard whenever our children's rights in the future are threatened and the New Jersey State Constitution is continually violated. We will be in Trenton in September to remind the Legislature that we are tired of being ignored, we

are tired of being taken for granted, we are tired of not being heard. We are sick and tired of being tired.

So from this day forward our voices and our actions will be heard. We are not too tired to continue the legacy of *Brown, Robinson, and Abbott*. We owe it to our children. After 40 years of struggle, we owe it to ourselves. Before it is over, our voices will be heard.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Mr. Vicente Perez, President, Essex County Black and Latino Coalition.

VICENTE PEREZ: Good evening, members of the Committee. Our Black and Latino Coalition was founded in 1992 by a group of African-American and Latino leaders concerned with some of the problems affecting us here in Essex County. One of the main purposes of the Coalition is to have us all work together in trying to solve some of these issues.

One of these issues has been the problem of education. We believe that with the proposed bill we will not correct the deficiencies that occur in the Newark School District. The State of New Jersey spent close to two years developing a comprehensive report on the problems of the Newark School District. With this legislation, you are destroying the opportunity to correct the deficiencies and create opportunities for our children to participate and be productive citizens, and create opportunities for the 21st Century.

Also, we are concerned that with the development of a thorough and efficient education we are creating -- we are trying to destroy the interdependence between the cities and the suburbs. Both communities need to live, because each of them is dependent for their success. With this type of

legislation, you are trying to put the cities and the suburbs to fighting for the scarce resources available to provide education.

What is going to happen, we don't know with this bill, but we feel very strongly that this bill does not provide the opportunities for our children to come up to the challenges of the 21st century. You took over the district. You brought the State in here. Now you are pulling its legs with this \$30 million cut. With this \$30-million cut, you will destroy the efforts of the reforms that are being proposed.

Thank you. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you.

William Hines.

WILLIAM HINES: Good evening. My name is Bill Hines. I am a retired Air Force Master Sergeant. I am also retired from the New Jersey State Lottery Commission.

I would like to read just a few words of an article that was in the Sunday *Star-Ledger*, "Education in Institutions" -- "Education and Youth," rather.

"The Commissioner of Education's statistics conveniently overlook the fact that upwards of 60 percent of urban school children drop out of school between 9th and 12th grades. One urban high school's class in 1981 began its freshman year with 1077 students, but 418 graduated. In this same school district, despite the Commissioner of Education's claim of thorough and efficient's success, 40 percent of this year's freshman class is already classified as a comp ed in reading and math both."

As a senior citizen, I am here to represent the children -- your children and my grandchildren. We have not heard that much, except for a couple of gentlemen here, really emphasizing our children. Having spent 22 ½ years in State government, I know about mediocrity. Only mediocrity in State government would conclude that we will lay off the people who have the small jobs, and keep the people, most of whom don't even live in Newark, who have the majority of the big jobs. We have almost 50 percent of the children dropping out of school, and of the few who do pass, their grades, even the top students-- They get low SAT scores, and that is mediocrity.

So I also blame you folks who have lost your jobs, because this article I was reading from, I wrote that in 1981. I have been talking about the lack of education in urban areas for the last 20-some-odd years, and we have sat on our phones. I call on the NAACP to either shut up or get involved, and forget about integration. Black folks do not need white folks to educate you, and they are not going to do it. It is our responsibility to our children to get out here and demand that our children have class sizes of no more than 14 to 16 children, that we do not promote a child to the next grade if he or she cannot do grade level work, that they have tutors, that if we get his money -- and we must get it-- Only an idiot fails to understand that you can't cut back if a school district is not teaching your children properly, and if they have 25 to 30 or 40 kids in a class, that you do not have education going on.

Therefore, you have to demand that every child-- If you don't want your child to end up getting laid off, because they always lay off the little people-- The children coming out of Newark should have those teaching jobs and those administrative jobs. If they do not have computers this year for

every child from first grade on, every child, our children will end up in jail in the 21st century. They will not get the education and the vocational training that they must have.

I would like to point out that ironically the legislators here are crying after-- As I said, I wrote this article in 1981. I see Mildred Crump at the meetings out here fighting for things. I see Assemblyman Craig Stanley out for these things, with the Million Man March. People have been fighting for the last year to try to get our people into these different programs. But most of the legislators, the feel, down here-- They have gone to West Orange. West Orange doesn't have near the problems of urban schools. This is where they should be, not in West Orange.

So if you folks do not demand the best-- It is time for black folks to wake up. If you do not start demanding the best-- We do not have parity, we are not equal. Our children are behind. They need more, extra. If you do not start demanding the best, you are not going to get it. You must fight for it. We have to get rid of all of the black politicians who are only ceremonial and are not doing the job, because if they were doing the job, Newark and these different black, urban schools would not be taken over and they would not be building all new jails to put our children in.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Minister Khadir Muhammad, Mosque No. 25.

MINISTER KHADIR MUHAMMAD: Good evening, everyone. I would like to say, first of all, thank you to Senator Lipman and to

the staff that is concerned about the cutback in the school system, particularly in the City of Newark,

My name is Minister Khadir Muhammad. I have been Minister of the Muhammad Mosque No. 25, also cochairman for the State for the Million Man March Coalition.

I would like to say, first of all, if anyone has the phone number for the office in San Diego where the Republican National Convention is being held, perhaps we could have a hookup with the Governor to let her know exactly what is being said tonight.

I would like to say that if it takes 30 percent of a tax cut-- The bottom line is, if you take Newark funding away from the school system and replace it with a cut to help Whitman do, I guess, what she has to do-- By all measures, literacy, the dropout rate, the test scores, plans to attend college, the cultivation of truth, the principles among today's youth-- The school system has failed.

Ten percent of the children are functionally illiterate. The high school dropout rate, at this time, is 30 percent. In this State, in this country, in this city, it is very, very high. I would like to say that education is supposed to be the cultivation of the gifts and the talents of the individuals through the acquisition of knowledge. So true education cultivates a person's mind, body, and spirit by bringing us closer to fulfilling our purpose for being, which is to reflect God. God today, as I know and as you know, is not in the school system that is being put out. He has been out for quite some time. This is no accident. This has been planned for a mighty long time.

The second purpose for education after this has been discussed, is self cultivation. It is to teach us how to give the proper service to self, family, community, nation, and then to the world. If the students are not learning this, then once they graduate, or come out of school, they cannot take the places of some of us as educators and politicians, who are supposed to lead the world and let people see how life is to be demonstrated, how we can move forward with the words we receive from education.

The problem in today's education is that the root motivation is the acquisition of wealth and material things, rather than the cultivation of the human spirit to learn. How can a child or youth receive education with everything in education predicated on a dollar bill and money that is going into some of the people's pockets to try to receive more benefits for something that they are not doing in terms of their job proposed to teach the students. This system is in place to keep the plantation running for the benefit of the rich and the powerful.

When African-Americans gained the right to attend nonsegregated schools to learn mathematics and science, whites began running away very fast. Some city colleges turned into vocational schools to teach us to be carpenters, electricians and date processors, instead of scientists, engineers, and doctors. Can you imagine that? We are back on the plantation again. It has been said that without mastering mathematics, science, and all the branches of engineering, we would never be able to be part of a great civilization. Newark is that example.

Now we are being faced with people sitting in front of us who are masturbators of education. Basketball players receive \$120-million contracts,

so a child spends more time learning how to throw a ball through a hoop. Boxers learn how to knock somebody out within 20 seconds to receive \$20 million. Drug sellers make more in one hour than what can be given to them from an underpaid teacher in class. We have over 10,000 black elected officials in this country and the same crap is going on and on and on in every city and every county. As a matter of fact, in every state in this country.

“Taxation without representation” -- you know the rest -- has been replaced with, “He who controls the tax code determines who pays the taxes,” and ultimately, who wins and who loses in the economy. The public school utilities are lacking. In science classrooms, there are no Bunsen burners, there are no on-hand experiences with dissecting and the certain learning of instruments with frogs or teaching kids the proper biological concerns. Physics is not present the way it should be. No up-to-date modern computer equipment. At this time, textbooks may become a cost-effective purpose in this country. Library use may become financially constituted, instead of public needs. Now I understand when you go down to the public library in Newark, you have to pay to rent the room now.

After-school help can turn into an overtime percentage paid by the student -- to get the student to pay the teacher for the things that the student should learn at the school. Phasing out of the lunch in the cafeterias is due to the lack of funding and overcrowding at this time. Summer schools have become a cost factor already in some cities.

If Fidel Castro -- I have to say this -- can, and he is a white man -- Cuba, you know from watching the Olympics, is all black. Here is a man who took the illiteracy rate from 1959 and 1960 and brought it from 30 percent up

to this point where it is almost 2 percent in terms of the amount of people who are left who are literate. Since we know this, we have to ask ourselves a question: Do we have here tonight the Ed Rollins people who have been affected -- who actually brought this woman into office? Is she concerned more so not with just the bell curve, but with the Christine Todd Whitman curve? If this is the case, then we must get our vote out. The voter registration must increase. The testimony that was given to me -- I believe it. We must work harder together to get new politicians in office who are not afraid-- (interrupted by applause from members of audience)

I'm sorry. We have all the other present School Board members who have talked. They received new cars, they live nice, they receive nice pay. But the education system hasn't changed. Now they have replaced that with a new woman called Hall. Let me tell you something: We should just take our kids out of the school system and teach them ourselves. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Laura Baker, President, Secondary Parent Council, Pro-Child Coalition.

L A U R A B A K E R: Good evening.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Good evening.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Good evening.

MS. BAKER: I would like to first preface my remarks--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Excuse me, once again. May we have quiet, please?

Thank you.

MS. BAKER: --by asking the elected officials representing the districts here in Newark-- I don't see Councilman Rice. I was late arriving.

However, I am asking Senator Lipman and Assemblyman Willie Brown to hold a forum to address the Newark School District similar to what we are having tonight. I came here prepared to speak on school funding, but I think it is critical that we deal with the issue of the \$500 million-plus budget that was derailed here in the City of Newark and nobody sitting in office had anything to say. I can't believe that happened, where people could lose their jobs, and our elected officials not speak out and not come to a Board meeting to deal with that issue.

The second point I want to make is that I do not believe that *The Star-Ledger* has so much control in this city that you would not believe a Board meeting was held the Tuesday after 634 people were laid off -- lost their jobs. I cannot believe they had that much control. But if they do, they need to move out of Newark. They need to move out of Newark. If they can't report out to the Newark community what is happening in our community, they don't need to be here. They don't need to be here.

Now I want to give my comments dealing with the school funding Plan as proposed by Governor Whitman by way of Commissioner Klagholz, with Senator Ewing as Chairman, main person, and ring leader of the bills that are emanating out of Trenton. I would like you to listen very carefully, but I want to thank all of you for the opportunity of testifying on Senate Bill No. 40.

First, I would like to state that the history of financing education in the State of New Jersey dates back to February of 1970. Even though the State Supreme Court ruled in April of 1973 that heavy reliance on local property tax for education discriminates against poor districts, here we are,

today, still trying to push through legislation that fails to equalize funding between the State's richest and poorest school districts. Senate Bill No. 40, as outlined in the Governor's school funding Plan, derails and circumvents the intent of the court's mandate, and fails to address an acceptable funding system that would place urban schools on an equal footing with their counterparts in the wealthier school districts.

Newark children need high-technology courses, high-tech science and computer math, and opportunities that will allow them to compete and prepare them for the 21st century. Our children need the best educational environment and opportunities to learn. They should be the benefactors of the Supreme Court's mandate without any further delay.

School districts should not be made to lower their standards, but let's up the funding and give every child the opportunity to learn. Our children need a full and fitting program with supplemental and enrichment activities that will enable them to reach their fullest potential.

Therefore, I urge you to reject Senate Bill No. 40, and I urge you to reassess and rewrite the Governor's school funding Plan to ensure it will provide extra education for all children. I also urge our elected officials to address this issue vigorously and rely on the Education Law Center for whatever it takes to make the State meet the educational and fiscal mandates of the New Jersey Supreme Court's decision. I hope this will happen very shortly. We need to start plans to benefit things. We will not settle for anything less. We should not be made to do without.

Senator Ewing, can you tell me how much the State owes the children of Newark based on the Supreme Court's mandate, because I think

those funds should be released now? Can you answer that question? How much is owed the children of Newark?

SENATOR EWING: They owe the children of Newark a good, solid--

MS. BAKER: Yes, based on per-pupil spending. Based on per-pupil spending, how much does the State of New Jersey owe the children in the 30 special needs districts then? I'll put it a different way.

SENATOR EWING: I don't know.

MS. BAKER: I think it is around -- how many millions of dollars?
(Indiscernible responses from members of audience)

SENATOR EWING: They said \$435 million -- somebody said.

MS. BAKER: They said \$660 million. How soon can you release Newark's money? Assemblyman Willie Brown, I am asking you to put something in motion in Trenton on behalf of Newark children to release the moneys that are due to them. You are their representative. Can you do that?

ASSEMBLYMAN BROWN: I will be glad to put it in.

MS. BAKER: Senator Wynona Lipman, can you put a bill on the floor to release the money to Newark's children -- the money that was due them over these years? I believe the court decision-- Their money can be released now -- the money that is due to Newark's children.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Okay, I will see what I can do.

MS. BAKER: I can't hear you, Senator Lipman.

SENATOR LIPMAN: I will see what I can do with that.

MR. BAKER: Okay. What we will do, we will call the Education Law Center, David Sciarra, and ask him to prepare the language. I expect Senator Lipman to put forth that motion.

Senator Ewing, what is your commitment to Newark's children? You are always visiting Newark. What is your commitment to Newark's children?

SENATOR LIPMAN: Ms. Baker, your time is almost up.

MS. BAKER: Well, let him answer that question.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Finish, finish. Why don't you finish?

MS. BAKER: You don't have to answer. We know your position.

(applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Is Fredrica Bey here -- Women in Support of the Million Man March? Fredrica Bey?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: There she is.

FREDRICA BEY: In the name of God, most precious, most merciful, I greet you with the greetings of peace, and I thank Senator Lipman and all of the legislators who have opened this hearing tonight.

On behalf of the Antilynching Campaign and the Women in Support of the Million Man March, Inc., we join the various organizations and taxpaying voters in condemning the massive cut in the Comprehensive Educational Improvement and Financing Act of 1996.

This bill is reminiscent of Bad Blood, the Tuskegee experiment when black men were used as guinea pigs to help to find a cure for syphilis, which was injected in all of the men. The men were lied to by a black nurse called Nurse Rivers, who told them that they had a condition called bad blood.

The men were lied to by white doctors who told the men that they were being treated for an existing condition, when, in fact, the doctors broke the Hippocratic oath by infecting the men and allowing half of them to go untreated.

The United States government lied by letting the Centers for Disease Control in Atlantic lie, cheat, and steal the very lives of many of these men, their wives and children on the pretense of curing, when, in fact, they were killing and maiming generations of unborn with this bastardized form of genocide.

Governor Whitman's school funding Plan has caused bad blood in all the districts in this State, especially in the urban districts. This Plan is deliberately changing the law, thereby breaking the law, *Abbott v. Burke*, that the Education Law Center devoted over a decade to having sanctioned through a court of law in the State of New Jersey. An expanded definition of lynching is given by our Governor's school funding Plan for 1997. Lynching is an execution without due process of law. We have had due process of law. *Abbott v. Burke* was that due process. The Education Law Center and the taxpaying, voting citizens of this State of New Jersey won that lawsuit. Governor Christine Todd Whitman and the legislators whom we have elected to swear to uphold the law have not only violated it with this bill, but are guilty of high treason, and should be punished with political death.

We will fight with our might, we will fight with our money, we will fight with our vote to ensure that our children receive, at the very least, life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness with a thorough and efficient education.

Thank you very much. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Mr. James Harris, Montclair President of the NAACP.

JAMES HARRIS: Good evening. My name is James Harris, and I am here tonight representing two organizations actually. Since the New Jersey Black Issues Convention testimony has already been given, I will speak on behalf of the State Conferences of the NAACP. The NAACP opposes S-40 and A-20.

First of all, I would like to welcome Senator Ewing to the 'hood. I thought I would get a chance to say that to-- (interrupted by members of audience) Senator Lipman, would you explain to Senator Ewing that we are talking about the neighborhood?

SENATOR LIPMAN: I see that Assemblyman Willie Brown has already explained that.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you, Assemblyman Brown.

I want to say thank you very, very much to Senator Lipman and Assemblyman Craig Stanley for bringing this hearing to Newark, and I would like to say good evening to Congressman Payne. It is always good to see him here supporting us. Also, I would like to express my thanks to the other people who are here tonight. I do find it somewhat disconcerting that since we have to fight so hard to get a hearing in this town, that most of the people have to get up and go someplace else. Perhaps people do not understand yet that education, for the NAACP, is a civil right. We put many, many years into the struggle for equality and the elimination of racial discrimination, and for folks to have other things to do when this issue is being discussed calls for some examination.

Before I start reading my comments, let me make a couple of observations that I really want people to understand. People of African ancestry and urban residents care a lot about the education of their children. Senator Ewing, I realize that you live in a safe district where most of the people in this room cannot vote for you, and I realize that most of the schools in your district do not have the problems that the districts represented by the 30 special needs districts have. You can make darned sure that people are recording the actions of the State, and particularly the Governor, when we roll around to November, and November of next year is going to be a particularly exciting time.

I really want you to understand the mood of the people in this room. There is some serious stuff happening, and I have not seen this intensity of anxiety in this town since 1960. I was in the housing projects at 121 Lincoln Street during the summer when folks had enough of not having enough. I understand that all of you, or most of you participated in the passage of that bill allowing the school takeover, but you really need to understand that in 1996 -- in 1996, the actions of the Governor and the Legislature appear to be specifically designed to destabilize Newark. The actions appear to be insensitive, uncaring, and malicious. When you lay off 634 people, you are economically destabilizing a town that is already in bad shape. When you lay off over 600 people in Newark, which already has one of the highest unemployment rates in the State, when that action is taken by people who ride into this district in limos, do not live here, do not spend money here, you are talking about the economic destabilization of this town.

However, there may be some good out of this. You may be politically waking up this town, because I think people are beginning to understand that if this bill, S-40, goes through, it appears that, once again, the majority party in this State is prepared to disregard the Supreme Court decision. The last time we studied history and civics, we were taught that there were three branches of government of equal power. They are the legislative, the executive, and the judiciary. We were always taught that the Supreme Court decision was law. Yet, after 20-some years, we find that even though the Supreme Court decision is for parity, that the Governor and the Legislature have put forth a bill that will not achieve that.

The NAACP supports the Supreme Court decision which calls for parity in the spending of the 30 special needs districts with the spending in the wealthiest school districts in this State. Senate Bill No. 40 does not meet the Supreme Court mandate, and the NAACP requests that you and the entire Legislature reject this bill and write a bill that would meet the mandates as indicated by the court.

Senate Bill No. 40 is flawed in many areas, the most serious of which is its failure to embrace parity funding for the poor school districts with the wealthy school districts. The legislation is a backdoor approach to changing the New Jersey Constitution by altering the definition of thorough and efficient. The NAACP asks that you accept the definition that was included in the Supreme Court decision. It is tragic when the legislators and the governors of this State try to put public policy into inequality knowing--

Senate Bill No. 40 is a bad bill because it is racially divisive. You know that when there is a discussion of urban anything in this State, people

see black and Latino faces. So when the bill talks about downsizing or taking away from the rural districts and giving to the urbans, it is pitting white folks against black folks and Latino folks, and that is unnecessary.

Are you saying in this bill that African-Americans and urban children are of less value than children in suburban, wealthy districts? Are you saying that the children in Newark and other urban cities do not deserve the same type of facilities, the same types of opportunity, the same type of safety? If that is what the public policy is saying, then the NAACP is prepared to fight you to death -- to death. This Comprehensive Educational and Improvement Plan is neither comprehensive nor an improvement. It is addressing deficiencies already-- It does not address the deficiencies defined by the court. This bill is the brainchild of some political bureaucrats who make cost estimates that are not even based on a school district that exists. These figures are completely taken out of the air, and to this date I have not been able to get the State Department of Education to give me the figures that they based this bill on.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Sorry, your time is up

MR. HARRIS: Okay.

The NAACP does not believe that there is a link between core curriculum and S-40. In summary, the NAACP requests that you withdraw this bill and write a bill that will address the mandate in the Supreme Court decision. I hope, Senator Ewing, as Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, that whenever you decide to hold a public hearing about anything dealing with education, bring it to some urban centers so that you can hear from urban folks, because if you don't come to us, we will find you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: We have Congressman Donald Payne with us, who heard about this hearing and who has come tonight to hear you.
(applause)

C O N G R E S S M A N D O N A L D M. P A Y N E: Thank you very much.

Let me, first of all, commend Senator Lipman and Assemblyman Stanley for calling this very important meeting, and let me acknowledge the other Assemblymen, Charles and Brown, and Senator Ewing.

Let me say that there needs to be many more meetings of this nature. We need to meet to plan. We meet to react, and reacting isn't going to change something after it is done. These kinds of meetings should have been held when the State was coming in here talking about taking over. You should have made your objections at that time. We have to stop being a day late and a dollar short on everything we are doing. We are going to have to take all of this energy and put it into something positive.

Now, there is nothing wrong with people coming together and expressing themselves. That is what it is all about. But after we express ourselves, we should have another meeting so we can tell those folks who are not going out and registering, and tell those folks who are not going out and voting, that this is just phase one. It is going to start with education, it is going to move to housing, it is going to go to health care, and it is going to keep on going on and going on.

Let me tell you something: You haven't seen anything yet. You should see what they have in store in Washington. This isn't just an isolated incident happening in one city, in one state in the United States. This is

happening in every state in the union right now, whether it is Ohio, where the state has taken over Cleveland, or whether it is Kentucky, where they have gone into Louisville.

It is the same thing you will see with this so-called welfare reform, where the states are going to take over welfare. In two years, people are going to be off. What is going to happen then? You talk about a shortage of employment today. You wait two years to when the states and the Federal government say that everybody has to be off public assistance, with no job to go to, and they know there is no job to go to.

Let me just say this: If we are serious about it, there will be some additional meetings of this nature so we can walk these streets and register people to vote. That is the thing that counts. Nothing else counts. The other stuff is all well and good to hear, but we have to register and we have to vote. We have to put the right people in places and we have to take the wrong people out of places. It all has to be connected.

I support this activity 100 percent. We are going to have to have some dialogue as this welfare reform comes down the line, because they are also talking about reducing Federal aid to education. They are talking about less funds for Pell grants, and they are talking about doing away with low interest on school loans. As a matter of fact, one proposal was that the interest begin the day the student borrows the money. Can you imagine that? That is what they have on the table.

So let me just say, once again, it is good to see everyone here. I would be willing to roll up my sleeves and work along with the Senator, the Assemblymen, and the other elected officials from this city, but we are going

to have to stop the reacting. We are going to have to organize ourselves, and we are going to have to have our voices heard. Don't be tricked by this Jack Kemp. You know, he is a great guy, but Bob Dole doesn't even like Jack Kemp. He figures he will use him. So we better get it right. We are going to have to get ourselves together.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Thank you, Congressman Payne.

Councilman Bryant E. Coleman, City of Irvington.

COUNCILMAN BRYANT E. COLEMAN: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. First of all, I would like to say it is good to see our Congressman Donald Payne with us. He has been one of my biggest role models ever since I entered government. I would also like to thank Senator Wynona Lipman and Assemblyman Stanley for sponsoring this forum.

My name is Bryant Eric Coleman. I am the East Ward Councilman in the Township of Irvington. I was just elected on May 14, 1996. I have been a township resident for the last 29 years. Not only am I lifelong resident of Irvington, but I have also gone through the entire Irvington School District education system. I graduated from the Grove Street Elementary School in the class of 1980, Mrytle Avenue Junior High School, class of 1982, and Irvington High School, class of 1986. Many of the years I attended the high schools in the school system in the Town of Irvington were some of my happiest years. I have met many great teachers and administrators, and am proud to call them all my friends.

When I look at the current days, I see a lot of changes, changes since I was a child going through the Irvington school system up to this point

in time. Some of our youth are attending elementary schools with 25, 30, or more pupils in each classroom. Our youth are attending high schools where they have to share textbooks in order to do homework effectively. These changes affect the very livelihood of the urban school district community. Now our youth in the urban school districts are facing cuts in funding by the State of New Jersey. When our youth leave high school not only do they have to compete with others in rural sections of the State of New Jersey, but they also have to compete with those from around the country and also from around the world in order to get accepted in the major universities of this country, as well as community colleges.

When aid is cut in the urban areas, the State begins to project a message to our youth, who live in single-parent homes in plighted conditions, in substandard housing, where over 50 percent of these homes are ran by single mothers, who attend schools where they lack supplies and up-to-date books, that no one cares about them. That is why many of our youth end up not finishing high school, dropping out in 9th and 10th grades, compared to 10 years ago when students dropped out in 11th- and 12th-grade years.

I urge the State to reconsider cuts in any type of State funding to urban communities, because if these cuts are made, these young people will not receive a fair chance in competing for scholarships and special student grants that are currently available, due to the fact that they drop out of school at a higher rate. Local urban school districts will have to cut services to youngsters with special learning problems, make cuts in transportation, school lunches, and after-school programs, or they will have to increase their budgets, causing

education taxes to rise. I am sure there is no board of education member who would like to vote for any tax increase.

I strongly ask that you reconsider these types of cuts that will hurt the urban youth, and look at other wasteful spending. Save our young people by offering them the fighting chance that they deserve. We have the New Jersey State Lottery, which is supposed to aid education. We have three racetracks in the State of New Jersey -- Monmouth Racetrack, Freehold Raceway, and the very popular Meadowlands Racetrack. New Jersey has Atlantic City with very large and impressive casinos. Why don't we find out where all the money in taxes is going from these multimillion dollar organizations?

In closing, I would like to ask that this Committee take into consideration all of what you are hearing this evening. You are hearing from parents, students, and also public officials who are very concerned about the welfare and education of our youth in this community.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: I am going to have to ask you to limit your speeches to about three minutes, if possible, because it is getting late and we still have a number of speakers left.

I would like to call Mr. Houston Stevens, PTA President, University High School.

H O U S T O N S T E V E N S : I hope I didn't give you my only copy of my remarks.

SENATOR LIPMAN: You can have it back.

MR. STEVENS: First of all, I want to thank you, Senator Lipman and Assemblyman Stanley -- I want to thank the two of you, as well as the other members of the panel who are here tonight. But I especially want to thank you for organizing this meeting, calling this hearing, and providing members of the education community here, as well as parents, with an opportunity to express their views on the Governor's funding Plan for public education.

Tonight I have prepared remarks, but I will depart from them briefly just to make a couple of points. I think this is a good step along the road until you actively and vigorously -- that is, I am speaking to the delegation from Newark and the urban districts and those who are of good conscience in the State Legislature-- I think this is a good step along the road until you actively and vigorously fight the racist stance that the New Jersey Legislature is taking on the funding of public education. We expect and we hope to see you and others continue in this very principled struggle on behalf of all New Jersey youngsters in the Legislature now and into the fall. They are out there for as long as is necessary to achieve the promise of *Abbott v. Burke*.

Let me begin by saying that shortly after moving here in 1988, I read a news report on the *Abbott v. Burke* decision. As a result, I secured a copy of the actual decision to read for myself. I was astonished that any court comprised of the aristocracy of the bar would conclude that the thorough and efficient clause in the New Jersey Constitution provided a constitutional standard mandating the State to fund education for all children according to need. That, indeed, was a revolutionary -- well, I wouldn't say revolutionary, but a very radical stance. Funding for education according to need.

Now, it makes sense to most of us. It certainly makes sense to me. But for the court to find that meant that they were taking a stance that was completely opposite to the fundamental interest of the ruling class in the State of New Jersey. The fact is, they were calling for equality. They were saying that children from poor districts -- that is, poor property tax districts -- should receive the same, at least the same educational resources as children from rich property districts. Now, that just flies against everything that this country is about. It certainly flies against everything that the ruling class is about.

At this point, I would just like to make reference to, you know, some of my earlier training in college. I was forced to read one of the classics, Aristotle's *Politics*. In it, Aristotle made reference to the fact that the function of the state is to regulate the distribution of economic power. That is what he said, "The function of the state is to regulate the distribution of economic power." Vladimir Ilich Lenin made a similar kind of observation. He said, "The function of the state is to carry out the class oppression of that class which rules." So now that is the role of the State.

Now, it is okay for parsons, that is, ministers, school teachers, and aspiring politicians to preach about justice, liberty, and equality for all. That is okay, but don't ever -- don't you ever, not in these United States of America, ever try to achieve equality and justice for all. Hang it up! Why are the politicians in the New Jersey Legislature and in the executive branch fighting so hard against *Abbott v. Burke*? Surely it is not because the State, you know, has never provided a thorough and efficient education for all children. So it is not because they have bad habits they cannot change. That is not the reason. It is not because they don't have money, because, you know, the

Governor cut the State income tax to drain the Treasury of funds. And despite that, we still have a \$550 million surplus in the Treasury budgeted. So it is not because they don't have money.

It is not because they don't have the resources, because there are plenty of teachers. There are empty buildings around the State. There are plenty of computers, books, and anything else you need to run schools. So it is also not because they don't have the know-how, because there are voluminous research reports lying in libraries and all kinds of experts in the colleges and universities. They have several excellent schools of education in this State alone. So clearly the capacity to provide, at least financially, a thorough and efficient job of educating all children, an equal and excellent education for all children, does exist.

But the will does not exist. The capacity is there, but there is no will. It is not in the Legislature. These politicians are fighting the implementation of *Abbott v. Burke* because this decision is not in the interest of the ruling classroom they serve. That is a fact. It is not in their interest. You cannot have a class of rulers without a class of those who are being ruled.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Mr. Stevens, can you just wind up?

MR. STEVENS: Let me make my point. I am almost finished.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: All right. Come on, let's go. We have to go.

MR. STEVENS: Inequality is what the American capitalist social order is all about. To educate all children equally would undermine that social order. As a matter of fact, one of the fundamental props of the American capitalist social order is racism. So racist inequality, which has historically

provided and continues to provide today the enormous profits that make it possible for 1 percent of the population to control 40 percent of the nation's wealth, still maintains, so you cannot educate these children equally. That undermines the entire structure of the system, because these children cannot come out believing that they ought to have an equal chance in society.

Black children, however, are not the only victims of such a system. Native Americans, Hispanics, immigrants, and working-class white children, who also live in especially deprived school districts, are also victimized by this racist inequality.

While we call upon you legislators to wage a vigorous struggle with your colleagues, I am personally not confident that you will have much success, Senator Lipman. The class interests of the rulers are too much in opposition to equality. What is needed is a powerful movement, for parents, teachers, students, education workers, and community activists to build a very powerful movement that is multiracial, antiracist, and proworking-class that challenges the very existence of this current social order. Then, and only then--

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Mr. Stevens--

MR. STEVENS: This is my last statement. When we challenge the whole system, then, and only then, can we see the ruling class begin to move in the direction of reform, because they will be trying to save themselves from being buried six feet under.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Councilman Donald Tucker. Please be brief. We are going to put a sock in it.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: He said he is going to be very brief.

COUNCILMAN DONALD TUCKER: Hello. My name is Donald Tucker. I am the Chairman of the Black Issues Convention.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Excuse me. Can you please be quiet? (addressed to audience)

Thank you.

COUNCILMAN TUCKER: I think we have submitted a position paper to you with regard to our opposition to the bill. We also made it very clear that we support the initial determination dealing with thorough and efficient, which is in the State Constitution. I just wanted to make that very clear.

The second point is, as a Councilperson within the City of Newark, we passed a resolution representing citizens within the City of Newark at our July meeting. I believe that has been forwarded to you. Again, we were just saying that we are against the current legislation.

That's it. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Kabili Tayari.

SENATOR EWING: Kabili, you are not on the list. You are not on the list.

KABILI TAYARI: Good evening. Senator Lipman and Assemblyman Stanley, I want to applaud you for doing something that most of us in the State of New Jersey have been trying to do for years, and that is remind the New Jersey Legislature that when they have these hearings, that the majority of the people, particularly when they are talking about education, are in these northern communities. I want to applaud you for making sure that the brunt of what would be felt is brought here to cities like Newark.

On August 20, I invite all of you who are interested to come to Jersey City where we will be continuing this type of hearing under the New Jersey Coalition for a Thorough and Efficient Education. I applaud that committee for doing that, and Senator Lipman, Assemblyman Charles, and Assemblyman Stanley for participating.

I just want to say something briefly, as someone who has been trying since 1980 to build something called the National Black Independent Political Party, that these times show more and more that there seriously needs to be a black political party in this country. There are 1.1 million school children in the State of New Jersey, 40 percent of them children of color, mainly African-American and Latino. The 30 poor school districts in this State house 80 percent of the children who are African-American and Latino -- 30 of the poorest school districts.

We need to understand in "*Savage Inequalities*," an article by Jonathan Kocal, that one of the school districts that he talks about that receives the worst education in the nation is in Camden, New Jersey, which is one of the 30 poorest school districts in the State. It is cited as one of the poorest in the nation.

In 1975, a black woman from Jersey City brought a lawsuit, *Robinson v. Cahill*, and won that suit on behalf of all poor children in the State of New Jersey. The State Legislature decided to introduce something called Chapter 212, thorough and efficient, and called it minimum aid. Districts like Cherry Hill, Princeton, and Alpine collected over \$6 billion off the backs of poor children under what is called minimum aid.

In 1990, something else was passed called QEA. Under QEA, the 30 poorest school districts received 5 percent of that money, and districts like Alpine, New Jersey, received 25 percent of that \$400 million. In Alpine, New Jersey, the average per capita income is \$400,000. Let me explain what that means: That means that if you are married, you and your wife bring home \$800,000. She makes \$400,000, you make \$400,000. Yet, the tax rate in a city like that in the State of New Jersey is no more than 60 cents, and, on a minimum, 19 cents per \$100 of property value. Yet, in Newark, New Jersey, and places like Newark, it is \$23 per \$1000 of property value. Yet, we are receiving the worst education and less funding.

The core curriculum standards -- our children can meet any standards that are put upon them, but in order to teach algebra, there must be algebra teachers. In order to teach physics and chemistry, there must be physics and chemistry labs. In order for children to read, there must be textbooks. In order for children to learn a world language, there must be world language teachers. In other words, people tell us that money doesn't count when it comes to poor children, particularly children of color. I say to you, as a member of the National Black Independent Political Party, the NAACP, and the New Jersey Black Issues Convention that S-20 and S-40 are racist and are against all poor children, because in our southern rural areas we are talking white poor children who live under these same conditions.

I say to you, destroy those bills immediately. I say to my people who are present tonight, let us not just be emotional. Let us organize.

Thank you, again, Senator Lipman and Assemblyman Stanley.
(applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: We have to make it brief. We only have a few more minutes in this place.

Ms. Joanne Miller, Vice-Chair, Pro-Child Coalition.

JOANNE MILLER: Good evening. I am Joanne Miller, a parent. My grandbaby left, but I wanted to show everyone here that that is our future. My grandbaby-- All of you have children, I am sure, or grandchildren. Those children are our lifeline as well. We live for those children. We want nothing but the best for our children. This is why we have come out tonight, to express our concern and our interest for what is happening to our children here in the City of Newark.

Our children must be educated and they must be given the opportunity to receive that education with speech and language specialists. Our children's child study teams must not be phased out. Our music teachers should not be phased out, and our libraries must be updated. We want our libraries updated. We want our school buildings updated, not just painted, Senator Ewing. We don't just want services that are painted. We want those schools updated, and we also wish to have new school buildings built here in the City of Newark. Some of our school buildings are extremely old, older than you. No offense to you, Senator Ewing, but some of them are older than you, and they need to be updated. If they are not updated, then tear them down and build new ones for our children here in the City of Newark.

We want our custodian workers, our cafeteria workers, who are among the lowest paid employees in our district -- and they are also our residents here in the City of Newark. I told that to Dr. Hall. I was very upset with her when she announced that these would be the first to go, our lowest

paid individuals. The lowest paid in this district are our cafeteria workers and our custodian workers. We need them. They are a part of our school.

I repeat: Our children will not take the loss. I repeat again: Our children will not take the loss. We will not stand for it, because we, the parents, and the community in Newark will not allow you to take money from our district and direct it to other districts that are in the suburbs. We will boycott the schools come September. We will not allow our children to enter the doors.

Senator Ewing, I am going to end, but I just want to say this also.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Ma'am, we only have five more minutes.

MS. MILLER: Okay. I just want to say this also: If you want to cut back, cut back on Dr. Hall's chauffeur. Cut back on her salary. Cut back on those administrators who are receiving those high salaries. Cut back on them, not on our children. Please give our district a chance, and our children a chance to survive. They are entitled to that. God make us all equal.

Thank you.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Georgiana Hart.

GEORGIANA HART, R.N.: Good evening. I am a school nurse and President of the Newark School Nurses. I am also a parent of three children, all of whom are going to the Newark schools. I am a member of the Pro-Child Coalition, and I am very proud to be so. I am also a member of the Progressive Labor Party, a Communist party, and that is really the stance I am talking from here.

I would like to tell a tale of the funding of two educational systems. You have heard of the *Tale of Two Cities*. Well, where I live, I was thinking this afternoon and writing this speech-- You know, when I drive around the West Ward of Newark and drive toward Maplewood and drive toward South Orange, do you know what you see? You see a one-way sign. You can't go up the hill. You see brick walls separating you from Maplewood. You see one-way street signs. You cannot go that way. They can only come toward Newark, the people up on the mountain, the people who own the Prudential, who own the Budweiser Brewery, who own General Motors. They can come down the hill. They have the one-way street. They go down the hill to make money off of us. This is exactly a symbol of what our education system is like.

Our children are facing a one-way street sign. They cannot go up the hill. I, as a school nurse-- You know, I was told when I went to school that if I got A's that I would be good, that I would graduate. Well now I am told that I may not have a job next year. I can't get a job in a hospital, because they just laid off nurses with 25 and 30 years experience.

A lot of people have been talking about laws and the Legislature. Well, I think there is one thing that burns in my mind. That is the golden rule. You know, he who has the gold makes the rules.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Ms. Hart--

MS. HART: I just have one more thing to say, because there is a tale of two cities here, two systems. One is the Communist system. We are told that we can't read about this in our history. We do not learn the history about what happened in Russia, where children were expected to draw a plan

of a house, run a farm, run a meeting, be a part of the community and construct society.

You know. Larry Hamm was talking about going on a hunger strike. What about a general strike to support these parents' boycott? What about a general strike? Also, what about a revolution? What about a Communist revolution? What about workers' power?

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: I'm sorry, but we are about to be kicked out. Really, we have to do a lot to get this one more speaker in. Roberto Del Rios, from ASPIRA, Inc.

D O N N A J A C K S O N (speaking from audience): Oh, no, don't make me act like a black person, because I am-- (remainder of comments indiscernible; no microphone)

SENATOR LIPMAN: We know, we know. You will have a chance after him.

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Please go ahead, Mr. Del Rios.

R O B E R T O D E L R I O S: In the essence of time, I will limit my comments.

We at ASPIRA understand that additional funding may not be the sole solution. However, we cannot realistically expect that a school funding formula that calls for educational improvement will require less funding. Proper implementation of the core curriculum standards cannot be expected without making financial investments. We support school reform, as well as educational innovation, but I reiterate that the renovation of our school system requires capital investment.

The drastic reductions proposed will no doubt have a deleterious

impact on the educational improvement of all children of our Garden State. To improve any garden, one must make significant financial investment. Taking into consideration the social problems that plague our urban schools, the proposed school funding formula will have serious repercussions and long-lasting effects in our communities. It is our humane responsibility to give all our children a fighting chance, but it ought to be of the utmost importance to give our urban children an equal opportunity to live the American dream. We are the foundation for their realization of this dream. Therefore, instead of retracting, we must guarantee provisions for equal educational opportunity in order for our urban children to foresee their dreams.

Come September, students will return to school with the expectation of a better new year. These expectations will be hampered even before the child enters his or her new academic year, if this proposed funding formula is passed. I wonder if this will be the same in a nonurban setting. However, I doubt it. Considering that parents in wealthy districts can provide the outstanding balance of their cuts, those children may never realize that they have undergone financial changes. Nonetheless, our children will not only realize it, but they will also display its significant academic impact. Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, can we consciously make decisions that will limit the expectations of students in the urban classroom?

We at ASPIRA believe that students have certain rights. I submit to you these rights in consideration for a new school funding formula:

- 1) Students are entitled to have parents, advocates, and concerned educators involved in all decisions affecting their education.

2) Students are entitled to learn in an integrated, heterogeneous setting responsible to different learning styles and abilities.

3) Students are entitled to comprehensive, culturally supportive and developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching strategies.

4) Students are entitled to access to a common body of knowledge and the opportunity to acquire higher order skills.

5) Students are entitled to broadly based assessments of their academic progress and grading structures that enhance individual strengths and potential.

6) Students are entitled to a broad range of support services that address individual needs.

7) Students are entitled to attend schools that are safe, attractive, and free from prejudice.

8) Students are entitled to attend school unless they pose a danger to other children or staff.

9) Students are entitled to instruction by teachers who hold high expectations for all students who are fully prepared to meet the challenges of diverse classrooms.

10) Students are entitled to equal educational opportunity supported by the provision of greater resources to schools serving students most vulnerable to school failure.

Lastly, I would like to say that it is written in the Bible that we are all created in the image of God. Our children in Newark, Camden, and Trenton are made in the image of God, and if we are good for God, we are good for anybody.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Donna Jackson.

MS. JACKSON: I just have one thing I want to ask, one thing I want to say.

The Newark Board of Education, the Newark public schools, whatever they call themselves, has had an opportunity for the last four months, through *The Star-Ledger*, through the TV, to advertise what they are going to do. I figure it is a disservice that they were given 20 minutes to give a presentation and did not say anything about the bumping that will occur again tomorrow. There are going to be another 600 layoff notices going out from Newark public schools tomorrow. (indiscernible comments from members of audience) Oh, I'm telling you because you need to know. I'm telling you because we are out here for the wrong reason.

See, this community, like all other urban communities, are uneducated about what is going on. We are out here tonight fighting for jobs, and the Governor is getting ready to take \$56 million out of this district next year. She tried to get another \$30 million out of us this year. So when people think they are going to fight for a job, the money won't be there to pay you. We are going to have 40 and 50 kids in a classroom. All I want you to do is have another hearing, but bring the people here. Give us some representation on the State Board, because there is no one from an urban community sitting on that State Board of Education. That is why we do not have a voice.

So I am going to close with that, because, see, when 600 more people get laid off tomorrow and Newark takes to the streets, I know my role. My role is to be out there to make sure that what we tear up ain't where we

sleep. So you tell Prudential, you tell PSE&G, you tell Blue Cross and Blue Shield, which is pimping us with those HMOs, Mutual Benefit, and the rest of them, that the residents of Newark are going to be out of work. They won't work either, because we will block every exit from 280 that they have access to, to get in and out of here. They won't come down hill.

Thank you. (applause)

SENATOR LIPMAN: Are you next?

MARYAM BEY: Yes, I'm next..

SENATOR LIPMAN: All right, what's your name.

MS. BEY: Maryam Bey.

SENATOR LIPMAN: I'm sorry, I have been bad. Introduce yourself. MS. BEY: May I ask the students who are here from Pro-Child to come up and pass these out for me, please, or someone from Pro-Child to pass these out? (unidentified person from audience complies) And also the statements here.

Thank you.

My name is Maryam Bey. I am the Chairwoman of Pro-Child, and I am going to say everything that I wrote down this afternoon, because we waited and submitted our names on time.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak before you this evening on behalf of Newark children and parents. The issue of education funding is so critical to the survival of our children. What is Pro-Child and who are we? We are parents, teachers, clerks, nurses, students, librarians, lawyers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers. We are Christians, Muslims, Nationalists, and Communists. We are a dynamic group of individuals who

saw the urgency of the community to come together to address the state of the emergency in our school district. We are a diverse group of parents, students, teachers, communities, and friends of children who understand the need to revolutionize the educational system and to wage war against an administration in government that is attempting to implement an educational Plan that will be devastating to Newark students.

We oppose a generic core curriculum that does not recognize the fact that students in urban districts have been systematically and intentionally denied, for many generations, an education that would prepare them to be confident and able to compete academically with their suburban neighbors.

We oppose a basic skills education. Our children are entitled to a broad-range education that includes science and technology, music and art appreciation, numerous languages, home economics, working science labs, sophisticated mathematics, and efficient, well-stocked libraries. To achieve this, we need every dollar for our children. To deny our children their constitutional rights is not only racist, but a mean-spirited miscarriage of justice. Our children are our most valuable resource, and we must invest in them and not divest--

I am going to go right to the end of my statement, because this is very important. We continuously hear, in Newark, that it is not about money, that it is about putting children first. If it is not about money, why do we pay our Superintendent \$139,000 a year? If it is not about money, why are we paying for her chauffeur-driven limousine? If it is not about money, why do we continue to pay outrageous consultant fees? If it is not about money, why are we firing teachers? If it is not about money, why did Dr. Hall recently fire

Newark residents who have children who attend this system? If it is not about money, why has Newark's classification rate for special education gone up 41 percent since the State of New Jersey took control of the Newark public schools? Because it is about money,

Our parents who live in this district are entitled to a job, and to deny our children and the people who live in this district that is unconstitutional, and we will not accept it come September. We are not accepting it.

Thank you. (applause)

ASSEMBLYMAN STANLEY: Thank you, Ms. Bey.

I really have to apologize, because we have absolutely no more time. I mean, the lights are about to go off in a second. I am really sorry. (interrupted by members of audience)

Excuse me, excuse me. What we invite anyone to do is to submit written testimony to myself or to Senator Lipman's office, and it will be included in the record. Won't it, Senator Ewing? (indiscernible response) It will be included in the State record as part of this Committee hearing.

SENATOR LIPMAN: Please, if you have anything written, give it to me tonight. We will submit it to the people who are taking the record.

(HEARING CONCLUDED)