



The League of Women Voters of New York State
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THE LEAGUE
OF WOMEN VOTERS
of New York State

The Honorable Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
Executive Chamber, 2nd Floor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

October 11, 2016

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Although much of our communication with you in recent past has concerned other League issues, today we write to go on record as being in full accord with the Alliance for Quality Education's aims in walking 150 miles to Albany from October 2-11. Our Education Specialist, Marian Bott, undertook this entire walk in 2003 and, during this past week, has walked again, as have other League members as the group has progressed through the Hudson Valley. By separate email, we will forward several pictures and one short video that Marian taped wherein Robert Jackson, former chair of the New York City Council Education Committee, with whom she walked in 2003, pleads the case on behalf of New York State's school children attending public schools.

The League of Women Voters has long held a position regarding State Finance that has resulted in our full support for the aims of Campaign for Fiscal Equity v. State of New York ("CFE"), originally filed in 1993. The League filed two *amicus curiae* briefs in connection with CFE and remains disappointed that the court order has not completely been followed. While we recognize that your budget last year called for a more balanced approach to increasing Foundation Aid (vs. Gap Elimination Adjustment) than the legislature ultimately agreed to in late March, we would like you and your budget staff to go even further this year by declaring that fairly increasing Foundation Aid for high needs districts is your highest PreK-12 state budget priority. It goes without saying that settling CFE legislatively makes imminently better sense than continuing to pursue actions through the New York State court system. Although Attorney General Schneiderman is bound to defend the state, we clearly recall, having worked closely with him at that time, that in his prior position as an elected representative from New York City, he fully supported CFE's aims.

This month we will be participating with a number of organizations in work to improve the details of the Foundation Aid formula, recognizing that, among other things, it is not now accurately accounting for students in poverty. We urge you to break away from geographic "shares" if the result of these organizations' recommendations is a reduction in the *proportion* of aid directed to low-needs districts. They were well-served by last year's Gap Elimination Adjustment elimination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dare Thompson'.

Dare Thompson
President