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# LIBERTARIAN PARTY OF ILLINOIS

## SENATOR MEEKS, WE ARE WITH YOU

When an elected, public official shows leadership on an issue and swims against the tide of conventional thought and stands up to the powers that be, that official deserves the commendation of the Libertarian Party of Illinois (“LP Illinois”).

At a recent luncheon at the Illinois Policy Institute, a free market think tank, State Senator James Meeks (D-Chicago) spoke about a voucher plan for some of the worst performing schools in Chicago. His plan would affect at least 22,000 students in the city and would allow them to pay for tuition at any school that would admit them. The legislation has been approved by the Illinois State Senate.

LP Illinois stands behind Senator Meeks in this effort. It is our belief that when a public school is failing their students, those students should still receive a quality education, and whenever possible, they should be able to attend schools with a better track record that can provide them with the right education to make them more productive citizens. We also applaud reports that Senator Meeks proposal was not met with the approval of the Chicago Teachers Union (“CTU”) and that CTU has vowed that he would not receive any more campaign money. In turn, Meeks has written them a check for every dime he has received. We feel that Meeks has shown considerable courage in this regard for standing up to arguably the loudest and most powerful voice against school vouchers, the teachers unions. Very few Illinois legislators are willing to buck strong special interest groups, no matter how big the problem.

Meeks’ legislation is a good start, but is not the only solution to all that ails the educational system in the state. The education tax credit needs to be expanded to cover more of the cost of educating children outside the public school system. This could include credits for parents who independently educate their children and also for taxpayers who donate to non-profit organizations that provide scholarships for lower-income children. Credits are targeted tax cuts, so no public money is spent. In short, lawmakers should start the process of bringing more educational freedom to both parents and students throughout the entire state.

*The Libertarian Party of Illinois is a political home for those who value honesty, fairness, respect, responsibility and compassion.*