

Madison Teachers Inc. Endorses Mary Burke for Governor

Written by Madison Teachers Inc. (MTI)

Wednesday, 02 April 2014 11:30 - Last Updated Wednesday, 02 April 2014 11:37



MADISON - Madison Teachers Inc. (MTI) is pleased to announce its endorsement of Mary Burke, candidate for Governor of Wisconsin. MTI Executive Director John Matthews said MTI believes Burke is by far the better candidate because of her unparalleled commitment to education and her commitment to improve the lives of children and families of Wisconsin residents. An excellent education is not only the foundation of a strong democracy, but opens the door to success for all children.

Matthews said that the difference between the two candidates is dramatic. Burke has achieved both undergraduate and graduate degrees from college; Scott Walker is a college dropout. Burke has honorably served on the Madison Board of Education and has contributed her time, talent, and finances to make the Dane County Boys and Girls Club one of the best in helping underprivileged children become successful in school and in life. Walker has no such experience.

Further, Burke has gone far and above in the MMSD by investing her own time and financial resources in (AVID/ TOPS), a college prep program, to provide academic coursework and counseling to children of families which have never before had a family member attend college. The program Burke funds has been extremely successful given that numerous AVID/TOPS students have now graduated from college and have become successful, contributing members of society. Burke also regularly volunteers in schools, working with both teachers and students.

Matthews said Burke's ability to stay on task and manage a large organization is also impressive, especially when compared to Walker who has spent more time out of the State than any other Governor in Wisconsin history. Instead of attending the UW basketball games last week, he opted to be in Las Vegas to meet with a potential large donor to his campaign.

Burke understands that the quality of education offered children in Wisconsin is an investment not only in the children, but is also an investment in our State. She understands that when children succeed academically that it pays dividends for all, that there are far fewer incarcerations, and the ability of the person to contribute to the community and its economic well-being increases substantially, Matthews said. Comparatively, Governor Walker's failure to adequately fund education, and his expansion of public financing of private schools through

vouchers and charters, has reduced the educational opportunity for Wisconsin children, and has caused harm to Wisconsin residents and communities now and for many years to come. Walker's providing of public funds to private and parochial schools through vouchers takes needed funds away from public schools.

Matthews said that MTI is impressed that Burke has pledged to bring about the long overdue pay equity by which women would receive equal pay to men for doing the same work. It is criminal that women are paid only about 2/3 of that paid to men when they are doing the same job, Matthews said. Public school unions did away with pay inequity between women and men 50 years ago, he said.

Matthews said MTI also sees great merit in Mary Burke's plan to increase by nearly 50% a parent's state college tuition tax credit. Under Burke's plan, students will graduate from college without the huge student loan debt which so many now have. That will be a big boost to Wisconsin's economy, because students will be able to pay rent, buy homes and cars rather than paying banks for student loans. Burke's proposal illustrates her belief in the value of education and that this program will benefit Wisconsin's families, its economy and its businesses.

MTI is also impressed that Burke recognizes the value to all employers of working cooperatively with their employees, that all are better off when they discuss how improved working conditions create a better and more productive work environment. That is why Burke is not afraid of collective bargaining, a concept Walker fears, Matthews said. Burke understands that through discussions between employers and employees both benefit; that nothing goes into a collective bargaining agreement unless workers and management agree that it is best for both. Walker, on the other hand, said his plans were to divide and conquer public employees.

MTI values Burke's business mind – an undergraduate degree from Georgetown and a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Harvard – and sees it as a great asset to creating jobs in Wisconsin. When she was Wisconsin Secretary of the Department of Commerce, Wisconsin had 84,000 more jobs than it does today, Matthews said.

The loss of jobs and the loss of income to public employees have caused several home-goods stores, including American TV, to close in the Madison area since the passage of Act 10, which substantially reduced the purchasing ability of public employees. This loss of income,

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Matthews said, was caused by Walker's anti-union legislation by which Walker raided pension and health insurance contributions, which most public employees were receiving in lieu of wages.