



AFT New Jersey, AFL-CIO

629 Amboy Avenue, 3rd Floor Edison, New Jersey 08837

Phone: (732) 661-9393 Fax: (732) 661-1776

Website: www.aftnj.org

For Immediate release:

April 18, 2013

Contact: Nat Bender, 908-377-0393,

nbender@aftnj.org

Education Worker Union Endorses Buono for Governor

Credit Senator's vision for education and New Jersey that works for all

MONTCLAIR...Senator Barbara Buono has an exemplary record of support for public education and will be a great governor for students, teachers and New Jersey families, according to American Federation of Teachers New Jersey (AFTNJ) President Donna M. Chiera. "We looked at the policy differences to make our decision and on behalf of 30,000 members in pre-kindergarten to 12 school districts and college campuses throughout the state, I am proud to announce our enthusiastic endorsement of Senator Barbara Buono for governor."

"I am honored to receive the endorsement of the AFT and its members who work everyday to build the foundation of New Jersey's future," Senator Buono said. "Governor Christie has left our education system in shambles - local school districts are underfunded, an alarming number of students are choosing to leave New Jersey to pursue higher education, and student debt continues to saddle the next generation."

"While the governor has demonized and bullied our educators, I stand ready to work with teachers and administrators as governor to improve education in New Jersey. Education is the great equalizer in society, and together we can move New Jersey forward."

Chiera, recently retired from a three-decade classroom elementary career in Perth Amboy, made the announcement at Montclair State University today, Sen. Buono's alma mater. She credited Sen. Buono's commitment to fixing public schools instead of undermining them with vouchers. "Sen. Buono supports just cause protections in tenure and understands the importance of peer review and assistance, allowing teachers to uphold the high standards of the profession."

For the state's largest higher education union, Buono's personal story of putting herself through Montclair then Rutgers Law School has particular resonance, according to Tim Haresign, President of the Council of New Jersey State College Locals and a professor of biology at Stockton College, one of Montclair's peer institutions. Buono would stem the tide of disinvestment in higher education that Governor Christie perpetuated, according to Haresign, who is deeply concerned with rising student debt.

[MORE]

www.aftnj.org | tweet @aftnj | www.facebook.com/aftnj

Labor produced

PAGE TWO: Education Worker Union Endorses Buono for Governor

“When she tells her story, the Senator’s passion for education comes through and she has expressed her commitment to develop New Jersey’s higher education system to offer our students sorely-lacking opportunities,” said Haresign.

“Sen. Buono supports increased state oversight of our colleges and university trustees to provide greater accountability and coordination among our campuses,” said Haresign. “Likewise, she has expressed support for academic freedom and the current tenure system for full-time faculty and improvements in working conditions for adjunct faculty.”

When Governor Chris Christie called for cutbacks in public worker pension and health insurance benefits, Sen. Buono called for negotiation instead of legislation, said Darlene Smith, Executive Vice President of the Union of Rutgers Administrators, the staff union at Rutgers where AFT represents all faculty and thousands of administrative workers.

Smith, a Rutgers Law alum like Buono, cited the Senator’s preference for collective bargaining to resolve workplace disputes as an indication of a respectful attitude towards conflict resolution and appreciation for challenges working families face. “She advocates closing loopholes for millionaires, supports increasing the minimum wage and promoted paid family leave to allow workers time to bond with their babies or care for critically-ill dependents,” said Darlene.

According to Chiera, Sen. Buono’s positions show she will be a great governor to lead New Jersey to economic stability and restore confidence in government’s ability to help citizens. “Our members have had their benefits cut while teachers, public workers and union members have been demonized,” she said. “Now we need to work together to elect a governor who will cultivate a New Jersey that is more humane, caring and collaborative. Our members are inspired and believe we have a real opportunity to elect such a leader in Senator Buono.”

[END]

The American Federation of Teachers New Jersey (AFTNJ) is a statewide federation of unions representing 30,000 education workers from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. AFTNJ represents the largest group of higher education professionals in the state with full and part-time faculty, college and university staff, graduate assistants and post-doctoral workers. The union represents pre- kindergarten through 12 teachers and support personnel in several schools districts as well as private, religious and charter schools. AFTNJ is committed to advancing unionization and advocates for sound education and progressive policy in legislation.

www.aftnj.org | [tweet @aftnj](https://twitter.com/aftnj) | www.facebook.com/aftnj

Labor produced