



June 30, 2006

Confidential

The Honorable Antonio R. Villaraigosa
Mayor
City of Los Angeles
Los Angeles City Hall
200 North Spring Street, Room 425
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Antonio:

We have been friends and I have been an active supporter of yours for almost ten years.

As you know, many of your supporters and I believe that true mayoral control of the Los Angeles Unified School District is vital for the future of our city. The history of mayoral control in Boston, Chicago and New York is one of progress, improved student achievement and closure of the gaps among income and ethnic groups.

A number of us supported Senator Gloria Romero's bill, which would have given the Mayor the option to control LAUSD. Unfortunately, you were not ready to support it at that time.

I believe that a campaign for mayoral control could have succeeded with a coalition of centrists, Republicans, progressive union leaders, the Chamber of Commerce, EdVoice and others. It is regrettable that you did not want to wage a campaign for true mayoral control, but rather, saw fit to negotiate with UTLA and CTA.

I regret that I cannot support, in its present form, the bill that was passed by the Senate Education Committee on Wednesday. Without reviewing all the reasons in detail, I will simply say that we completely agree with the editorials which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* with regard to the proposed legislation. If significant changes are not made, we may be better off having the bill fail.

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The following changes would lessen our concerns.

- The Superintendent must be allowed to exercise complete control over hiring and firing of principals.
- The collective bargaining agreement with the unions should be negotiated by the Council of Mayors – not a union-controlled school board. The unions can spend millions to elect school board members, and thereby have a seat on both sides of the bargaining table. Serious campaign reform is needed to prevent single special interests from controlling a majority of the board.
- The budget must be approved by the Council of Mayors.
- The progress that has been made in Los Angeles, Boston, Chicago and New York is a result of having the Superintendent offer a uniform curriculum, rather than allowing teachers at each school to determine the curriculum, textbooks, etc.
- The Inspector General must report directly to the Council of Mayors.
- The powers of the Mayor in the partnership schools are not clearly delineated in the legislation. These schools should be treated as a separate district, accountable directly to the Mayor.

Antonio, I hope the above changes can be made between now and the August reconvening of the Legislature.

Edge and I send you our best wishes.

Sincerely,

EB/srm
c Robin Kramer
The Honorable Fabian Nunez
The Honorable Gloria Romero

Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's office released this letter Friday, following requests by the LA Weekly and other media outlets.