

April 27, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

I write to share with you my deep concerns about the UTLA campaign at Alliance schools and why I will not sign any UTLA petition or card. If you agree, please read this and share with your colleagues at Alliance.

On Thursday, April 23, I read in an online press report that UTLA would hold a press conference on my campus at 6:30 the next morning. I was anxious to hear what would be said, but to be honest, it felt a bit invasive and sneaky. Why hadn't teachers at our school been informed about this by UTLA? Why hadn't we – the teachers they claim to want to represent - been told so that we could prepare or even so that we could be present? I went to the press conference and what I heard deeply disturbed me as an educator.

At the press conference, I heard again and again that UTLA speaks for Alliance teachers. UTLA does not speak for me or represent me. It also doesn't represent any of the many other Alliance teachers who joined me this morning and who share my concerns.

I first became aware of UTLA when they came to my home late in the evening a few years ago. I felt immediately bullied and questioned how they had found my address. They made several vague statements that did not impress me or ring true about my teaching experience at Alliance. At Friday's press conference, they continued to make generalizations and even claimed that teachers have been bullied or harassed. Yes, I wanted to say that I have been bullied and harassed—by UTLA.

In addition, I am also concerned about UTLA's lack of communication. I have reached out to them multiple times with questions and have received no answers. At the end of March, I specifically asked them to address the first Alliance Fact Sheet. When the Alliance Educators group responded, they said that the fact sheet was a "distraction." I pressed to speak to a UTLA representative and was told they would get back to me. It has been nearly a month, and I have heard nothing. I even asked the UTLA President and a UTLA representative at the press conference about my questions, but they had no answers. In fact, UTLA seems tone deaf to teachers who are not already on their side. How can I expect to be represented by an organization that can't even respond to my e-mails?

Based on my previous union experience, I know that, when it counts, it would NOT be teachers who would have the power in representing me if my school unionized. It would be UTLA, and they have not proved to me that they are worth my trust or my money.

Alliance has been open and willing to hear my concerns and the concerns of other teachers. They have answered questions with facts. I keep hearing that teachers want a seat at the table. I have seen movement in that direction in my last three years as an Alliance teacher. Instead of handing over power to UTLA, I believe that we should continue to take the momentum and empowerment of teachers and push for our voices to be heard. I do not want vague promises. I want clear action and facts, not deception and misinformation.

I will not be signing any petition or card provided by UTLA. I hope you won't either.

If you share my concern or have any questions about my experience, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you, and have a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

Veronica B.
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