



House of Representatives

RHONDA BURNOUGH
REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 77
7843 CLEARVIEW CIRCLE
RIVERDALE, GEORGIA 30296
(770) 907-2301 (H)
rhonda.burnough@house.ga.gov

COVERDELL LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
ROOM 409 C
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334
(404) 656-0116 office
(404) 656-0250 fax

STANDING COMMITTEES:
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
HIGHER EDUCATION
SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Teachers Do Not Let Anyone Minimize Your Power

I retired from Clayton County Public Schools three years ago. I loved being a teacher because each day you had the opportunity to make a difference in someone's life. I worked in the field of Education for over 38 years. Teaching is an Art and a Science. This is why it is difficult to hear people talk about Educators during COVID-19. In August Georgia State Representative Steve Tarvin posted on his Facebook Page that teachers are "self-centered, cry babies" who are nervous and cautious about going back to school as the Coronavirus continues to spread."

When I read this, I was disappointed that he would make this statement about our profession one that demands that work hard every day. None of us would be where we are today if it were not for our teachers who taught us and were there to guide us along the way. Educators have been essential workers long before the President started calling them that. Every new school year teachers have the potential to catch whatever their students bring into the school environment. It usually comes down on us one or two months after school starts. That is why each year teachers find the best regiment to build up their immune system to stay healthy. They purchase Kleenex and Sani-wipes for their classrooms. Educators sign a contract to teach not to babysit so the economy can recover. Educator's contracts do not state that you should ignore your health or put your family in danger. Teachers teach while many times nurturing and supporting their students.

When our Nation was quarantined, and students could not come into the building. Teachers did not stop doing their jobs. They had to learn a new teaching skill to make sure they were meeting their student's needs and turned areas of their homes into classrooms. Some Educators did not have internet in their homes and had to find hot spots. Teachers prepared packets for the students who did not have technology and delivered them to their homes so they would not get behind.

Educators have been conducting mental checks on teachers, students, and parents, arranged parades through their school's neighborhoods, and called parents to ease their stress. Many school district re-purposed employees so that they delivered meals, conduct home visits, and provide hot spots for student computers. Many teachers had to teach their own children while they were teaching their students.

Dr. Barbara Pulliam former Superintendent of Clayton County Public Schools explained it best as she reflected on her teaching career. She stated "Perhaps the best observation I can make is the fact that our teaching staff was excellent. We rolled with the punches, made exceptions for student learning, and worked innovatively and smartly to provide all the students the best education we

could. We did our research, visited staff at the University to look for the best way to ensure a quality education continued.”

This is what teachers do every day. When someone speaks negatively about them, I take it personally because much of the hard work they do includes teachers being flexible, innovative, and serious about making sure their student excel.

The Governor and State Superintendent failed educators when they did not provide a road map for school districts during this Pandemic. If they had made a statewide decision for all school districts in the State of Georgia, we would have had a plan for the beginning of the school-year that would have ensured the safety of teachers, students and parents.

Educators Do Not let them take away your power!

Educators Do Not let them minimize our Profession!

Educators Do Not let them think that you are not paying attention!

Take the time to make certain your colleagues are “Registered to Vote” and have a Voting Plan. Teach your students about the importance and make sure they understand the Power of Voting and perhaps most importantly encourage them to share this information with their families.

This why more than ever before I need educators to become that **Powerful Voting Base** that will demand the Secretary of Education and our Governors provide adequate funding for America’s children and schools. Make certain that our Legislators know that we need their support to support our students. Governors cannot continue to reduce the Education Budget to balance the State’s Budget or continue to believe that Educators can continue to do a good job without increased support, or they don’t think it is an important enough Profession. Let them know they cannot just give you a raise one year and then cut your pay the next year.

It is our time to Stand Up and let them know what our profession needs. You are intelligent individuals who spent many years in colleges and universities to be prepared to work in this profession. Our student’s education starts with their parents and then they meet us in school. For twelve years we stand ready to prepare them life in our nation and world. We are responsible for our community’s doctors, lawyers, nurses, grocery store workers, ministers, and elected officials.

We are proud of the work we do! We are Proud to Be Educators!

State Representative Rhonda Burnough, District 77