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MARLENE TERRY
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COMMITTEES
Children and Families
Ethics
Corrections & Public
Institutions
Legislative Review, Ranking
Minority
Joint Committee on Education

PRESS RELEASE

Today, while reflecting in the corridors of our democratic institution, I was reminded of the importance of openness and dialogue.

During a recent meeting, the House Democratic Caucus reached a consensus, supporting the Senate's stance on House Bill 2 to fully fund the K-12 foundation formula, and opposing taxpayer funding for private school vouchers as outlined in House Bill 12.

I would like to address some concerns surrounding this process. Both Minority Floor Leader Ashley Aune and Assistant Floor Leader Marlon Anderson informed me of the caucus's decision, and I was made aware that any potential consequences regarding my position would be determined by Ashley Aune. My immediate thought was to inquire about how this relates to my role.

I strongly advocate for providing quality education for every child, whether through public, charter, or private schools, as I believe parents deserve a variety of choices. It is crucial that we support options that align with the diverse beliefs of citizens in the State of Missouri.

I'm also curious as to why the Democratic Caucus has not taken more definitive stands on significant issues like DEI or the oversight of the St. Louis Police, as well as remaining quiet on a Department of Corrections bill that affects many residents across Missouri. Moreover, I find it troubling that members may feel pressured to vote in a specific direction based solely on caucus directives. This dynamic must evolve.

As an elected representative, my primary responsibility is to advocate for the well-being and safety of my constituents. For the past 14 years, I have worked to enhance the lives of families, children, and seniors in my community through legislation aimed at addressing critical issues, from combating food deserts to ensuring better educational choices, reducing crime, and protecting our seniors.

It is essential for our caucus to genuinely support all voices, including those of African American women, and to prioritize qualifications over personal connections in our decision-making processes. In a democracy, every vote matters, and it is vital that we foster an environment free from intimidation and promote respectful dialogue among all members.

Regarding funding disparities, I noted that Kansas City Democrats received nearly \$50 million more in earmarks in the current fiscal year budget compared to St. Louis and St. Louis County. This is an important discussion that we must actively engage in to better serve our communities.

I will not allow the minority chair to dismiss my contribution because I believe it's essential to uphold my dignity and ensure that every voice is heard. I will continue to advocate for the needs of the people and defend my right to vote on behalf of their interest.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marlene Terry".