

All,

1. New Members. A big welcome to Jamie and Stuart Butler who are following our parents listserve four part mantra:

- Send an updated support letter to rehire Dr Siebens to our target list:

adrian.fenty@dc.gov
mayor@dc.gov
amfenty@hotmail.com
Michelle.Rhee@dc.gov
petecahall@hotmail.com
Pete.Cahall@dc.gov
VGray@DCCOUNCIL.US
MCheh@DCCOUNCIL.US
yalexander@DCCOUNCIL.US
jrauch@DCCOUNCIL.US

- Make sure other parents they know do the same, and tell parents they know;
- Reach out to people they know who share our belief in the importance of quality education, but are sufficiently disturbed by the dismissal of Dr. Siebens to be willing to communicate their views to the decision makers. It is especially important to reach those whose professional standing in education, the sciences, government, etc. whose professional opinions are hard to dismiss; and
- Be ready to sign the petition and come to future rallies and benefit concerts.

2. Support Letters. We just learned of a remarkable letter sent by a prominent biology professor with 44 years at Oxford, copy attached, which was sent to our list of target recipients. It is a powerful statement of how teachers like art should be treated.

Please read this letter and send it to your friends and colleagues and ask for their support.

I am embedding it below in the event that anyone has difficulty opening the attachment:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

15 July 2008

I am Director of the Glycobiology Institute at Oxford University, where I have taught for 44 years. I was Head of the Department of Biochemistry there too from 2000-2006. It is the largest department of Biochemistry in the world and one where the

interactions with teachers of Biology of future students is a priority. Last year I was the Kluge Chair of Technology and Society at the Library of Congress and matters of education were frequently on the agenda. I am currently in the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla where I hold the position of an Institute Professor.

All these positions are concerned with the teaching of Biology in some way. So the news regarding the failure to re-appoint Dr Siebens has alarmed me and many of the academic community. I have read the background to this and the manner of his dismissal seems contrary to natural justice and shows a lack of understanding for what he has achieved.

As a former school teacher myself, I well understand the need for change when something is wrong- but the record of Dr. Siebens is truly outstanding. If you are doing something well and it is important and valuable to society, then why change it? It takes immense courage to reverse a decision already taken-but I think Dr Siebens's record speaks volumes for him. His reputation as one of the very best teachers in Biology in Washington has been brought into contention by your actions. It makes me wonder if there are other agendas here.

The manner in which the dismissal has been done denies the respect due to Dr. Siebens. We, who are in positions of responsibility, must teach respect for teachers and we must set an example. To treat such valuable teachers in this way is contrary to all we stand for and creates a feeling of injustice.

In Edmond Burke's words "all it takes for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing". We must be governed by justice with all that implies about "being seen to be done".

This matter is no longer a simple provincial affair. Education concerns us all-it is our future. I urge you to reconsider and to reinstate him and show your courage and commitment to the future generations. In matters like this there are no winners but justice must prevail and the reinstatement of Dr. Siebens would bring widespread support as just and courageous. I hope I have not written in vain.

Yours sincerely

Professor Raymond A Dwek, FRS, DSc. D.Phil, MA, APS, Hon, FRCP.
Pres.Inst.Biol.
Director of Glycobiology Institute
