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### **Chris Korsmo Opening Statement for AP Panel**

THE LEAGUE OF EDUCATION VOTERS WAS FOUNDED A DOZEN YEARS AGO BY WASHINGTONIANS TO SUPPORT AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES ALL STUDENTS WITH AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR SUCCESS FROM CRADLE TO CAREER.

SINCE THEN, WE HAVE HELPED LEAD ON MANY OF THE LANDMARK FUNDING AND POLICY DECISIONS THAT ARE IMPROVING THE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE IN WASHINGTON.

SADLY, THERE IS STILL MUCH TO BE DONE. THIS GENERATION WILL BE THE FIRST IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY TO BE LESS EDUCATED THAN THEIR PARENTS.

AFTER THE SOVIET UNION BEAT THE U.S. INTO SPACE WITH THE SPUTNIK SATELLITE, AMERICA RESPONDED WITH A MASSIVE AND SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO BE FIRST TO THE MOON. WE NEED A SPUTNIK MOMENT. WE NEED TO JOIN TOGETHER TO HELP OUR KIDS AND OUR STATE COMPETE IN A GLOBAL ECONOMY.

WE RELY TOO MUCH ON APPOLLO 13 MOMENTS. FOR THOSE OF YOU TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER: WITH THE APOLLO 13 ASTRONAUTS IN MORTAL PERIL, NASA SCIENTISTS HAD TO JURY-RIG A WAY

TO SCRUB THE CARBON DIOXIDE FROM THEIR DAMAGED SPACESHIP USING ONLY THE MATERIALS ALREADY ONBOARD. THEIR SUCCESS WAS A SHINING EXAMPLE OF AMERICAN INGENUITY **AND** EDUCATION.

THAT'S WHAT WE'RE ASKING OUR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS TO DO NOW: JURY-RIG AN EDUCATION FOR THEIR STUDENTS WITH ONLY THE INSUFFICIENT MATERIALS AND TOOLS AT HAND. SOME OF THEM SUCCEEDED. IN BRIDGEPORT, A RURAL AND MOSTLY LOW-INCOME SCHOOL DISTRICT PRIMARILY SERVING LATINO STUDENTS, NEARLY ALL KIDS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL AND THE VAST MAJORITY GET ACCEPTED INTO COLLEGE. OR IN FEDERAL WAY, WHERE AP IS THE DEFAULT FOR KIDS WHO PASS THEIR STATE TESTS. WE APPLAUD SUCH INSPIRING EXAMPLES AND WE SHOULD DO WHAT WE CAN TO HELP CREATE MORE OF THEM.

BUT FEEL-GOOD STORIES CAN DISTRACT US FROM PRESSING REALITIES: IN TOO MANY PLACES, WE'RE FAILING TOO MANY KIDS.

IN OUR STATE, 14,000 STUDENTS A YEAR DROP OUT. FEWER THAN 30 OUT OF 100 STUDENTS ARE PREPARED TO APPLY TO COLLEGE, EVEN THOUGH THE MAJORITY OF FUTURE JOBS IN OUR STATE REQUIRE A COLLEGE DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL.

WE NEED TO GIVE OUR EDUCATORS BETTER TOOLS AND MATERIALS TO WORK WITH:

FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN FOR ALL. HIGH QUALITY EARLY LEARNING. BETTER TEACHER TRAINING.  
ACADEMIC STANDARDS THAT GUARANTEE A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA WILL MEAN SOMETHING.

WE COULD DO THESE THINGS. BUT WE HAVEN'T. SOME OF THE REASON IS MONEY, AND WE  
UNDERSTAND TIMES ARE TOUGH. BUT IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT MONEY. IT'S ABOUT COLLECTIVE  
WILLPOWER.

THE TIME FOR HOPING THE PROBLEM WILL GET BETTER IS OVER. THE NEED FOR ACTION IS URGENT.  
THE LEAGUE OF EDUCATION VOTERS STANDS READY TO HELP.

THANK YOU.